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CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Preface

I am grateful to the many colleagues and friends from whom I have learned about Rousseau, or who have called my attention to infelicities or occasional mistakes in the translations and in the Editorial Notes, among them Steven Angle, Joshua Cohen, Maurice Cranston, Lydia Goehr, Wolfgang Iser, Leon Kass, Sam Kerstein, Ralph Leigh, Mark Lilla, John McCarthy, Terence Marshall, Heinrich Meier, Donald J. Moon, Robert D. Richardson Jr., Charles Sherover, Karl Heinz Stierle, William Trousdale, Robert Wokler. Professor Raymond Geuss has been unstinting in his advice regarding the content and the form of the Introductions.

Annotating texts as varied and as rich in references of every kind as these is a cumulative task. No single editor is so learned as to pick up and identify every one of Rousseau's sources and allusions. All students of these rich and rewarding texts are in debt to the learned editors who have come before us, and we can only hope to repay a part of that debt by doing our share in helping those who will come after us. After a time some references become common property. I have named the sources and editions I have consulted in acknowledgment of such general debts. In the cases where I am aware of owing information to a particular editor, or an accurate or felicitous rendering to a particular translator, I have indicated that fact. In some cases I mention differences with a given edition; it should be clear that by doing so, I also indicate my esteem for that edition: it is the one worth taking seriously. I have recorded specific help in making sense of a particular passage or in tracking down an obscure quotation in the corresponding Editorial Note.

Several of the translations and of the critical apparatus accompanying them in this volume originally appeared in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses, together with the Replies to Critics and Essay on the Origin of Languages*, Harper & Row, New York, 1986. All of them have been reviewed, and wherever necessary revised.

I am indebted to Joy Johanessen, Revan Schendler and Mark Lilla for their care in going over some of the new translations.

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I wish most particularly to thank Mary Kelly for her many years of generous and patient help in transforming often untidy manuscripts into legible texts.

I must thank The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, for permission to reproduce the frontispiece and title page from its copy of the first edition of the *First Discourse* (PML 17422) and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University for permission to reproduce the frontispiece and the title page from its copy of the first edition of the *Second Discourse*.

My greatest debt is to my wife, Jacqueline, who has again sustained and inspired me far beyond anything I could hope adequately to acknowledge.

I dedicate these volumes to the memory of my father.

Introduction

Rousseau has permanently altered how we perceive ourselves, one another and the world about us, and in particular how we conceive of politics and what we expect of it. The power and challenge of his thinking were recognized from the first, with the publication in 1750 of his *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*, the so-called *First Discourse*. His influence grew steadily during his lifetime, and it has continued to grow ever since. The French Revolution was profoundly influenced by his teaching, as, to a lesser extent, was the American Revolution. Romanticism, in all of its forms, was set and kept in motion by his thought and example more than by anyone else's. German Idealism owes its most powerful impetus to him. Kant's debt to him is well known.

Rousseau is one of the two or three great thinkers who chose to present their thought in dramatic form, through the speeches and deeds of a large and varied cast of characters who explore the alternatives, sometimes by themselves alone, sometimes in dialogue or even in confrontation with one another. Rarely if ever does he present wholly disembodied argument, sense dissociated from sensibility. The alternatives he has his characters explore are always also alternative ways of life. Two poles as it were define the territory they explore: the public, political life in its various guises; and the essentially private, "solitary" life in its various guises. The public, political life is most typically the citizen life, and its exemplary representative is the Younger Cato, "the greatest of men" (*Ineq.* II [57]); the private life is most typically the philosophic life, and its most exemplary representative is Socrates, "the wisest of men" (*Pol.*

Ec. [30]); but it is also the life of the pre political savage and, at the other extreme, the life of what for want of a proper term might be called the trans-political life of the solitary walker and of cosmopolitan benevolence. For the most part Rousseau presents the two ways as mutually exclusive. The many other figures to whom he assigns featured roles represent variations on these alternatives. Some are historical or quasi-historical figures: the great law-givers, Lycurgus, Moses, Romulus and Numa, and the Plutarchian heroes of Republican Rome; some are characters of his invention: Emile and his wife Sophie, the Savoyard Vicar, Julie, whom he calls the new Héloïse, her Abélard, St. Preux, and her virtuous atheist husband Wolmar. The first person singular, the most prominent, best-known member of this cast, is so many-faceted, that it is safer to begin by respecting the different identities Rousseau assigns to it in different contexts: the Citizen of Geneva who aspires to live beyond his century by identifying with the unsophisticated mass of men in the *First Discourse* ([2], [60]), but in the *Second Discourse* proclaims himself a student in Aristotle's Lyceum "with the likes of Plato and Xenocrates as my Judges, and Mankind as my Audience" (*Ineq.* E [6]); the thinker who assumes the proud motto *vitam impendere vero*, to dedicate life to truth; the tutor of the none-too-bright Emile; the ostensible compiler and occasional annotator of the vast correspondence that makes up the *Nouvelle Héloïse*; and of course the subject and author of several autobiographies. Even these autobiographies are clearly not the mere outpourings of an excessively effusive exhibitionist, but case studies and illustrations of his theories. After all, a work called *Confessions* announces in its very title that it is entering the lists with Augustine.

By presenting his thought in dramatic form, and alternatives as alternative ways of life, Rousseau effectively undercuts the sharp traditional distinction between strictly theoretical and strictly practical writings. In the words of his memorable formula, he seeks both to persuade and to convince. By undercutting the traditional distinction between theoretical and practical writings, he also effectively undercuts the sharp traditional distinction between the branches of philosophy: first philosophy or metaphysics, the philosophy of nature, ethics/politics. At times it may appear that he writes about ethics/politics to the exclusion of the other traditional domains of philosophical or human concern. Indeed, at times it may

appear that he subordinates all other domains to the political, that he radically politicizes life and philosophy. Further reflection proves that he does not. He remains ever mindful of the pre-political foundations and the trans-political aspirations of political life. He does, however, write about all domains of philosophical or human concern from a political perspective. It is, for him, *the* organizing perspective. He saw that political life, life in political societies – that is to say, at a minimum, in stable associations of large numbers of people under law, sharing beliefs and practices ordered by an at least tacit conception of the good and hence also of the common good, and embodied in representative human types – is our "common sense," workaday frame of reference. That is what he means when he says that he came to see that "everything is radically dependent on politics" (*Conf.*, IX, *OC* I, 404). Precisely because he regarded political life as our medium, he was ever mindful of its distinctive character and constraints. Much as he wanted to change political conditions in his time, he was keenly alive to how precarious decent political life is. He anticipated revolutions, but he did not advocate them or hold out high hopes for them (*Observations* [62], *Ineq.* II [56], *Languages* 20 [1], *Emile* III, *OC* IV, 468, tr. 194). Even the best intentions in the world have unforeseen consequences. One of the dominant themes in his last political work, the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, is how to reform without revolution (13 [13], [20], [24]; cp. *Judgment of the Polysynodie* [5], *OC* III, 637f.). All of his writings are, then, political also in the sense of being politic.

Although he was without formal education, Rousseau had early read the classical historians, but especially Plutarch, whose heroes peopled his imagination and nourished his thought throughout his life. By presenting, or at least illustrating much of his own thought through representative persons in whose deeds and thoughts we become personally involved, he is taking Plutarch's *Lives* as his model just as much as he is Plato's dialogues. He seems to have read Grotius's *Of the Right of War and Peace* when he was quite young. He studied closely most of the classical, and many more ephemeral contemporary, works of political philosophy and of history. In his early thirties, between 1745 and 1751, while employed by Mme. Dupin, he studied and wrote abstracts of Plato, Bodin, Hobbes and Locke, of Montesquieu's *Of the Spirit of the Laws* soon after its publication, and of the Abbé de Saint Pierre's projects for

a European Federation and for Perpetual Peace. In his day, the most systematic, comprehensive compendium on political philosophy was Pufendorf's *Right of Nature and of Nations*, especially in Barbeyrac's learnedly annotated French translation, *Droit de la nature et des gens*. He seems to have kept its massive two tomes at his elbow whenever he undertook a major project in political philosophy. He had contemplated writing a work on *Political Institutions* ever since 1743–1744. The Dijon Academy Question, "Has the Restoration of the Sciences and Arts Contributed to the Purification of Morals?", announced in late 1749, prompted his first publication on the basic problems of politics, but it did not prompt his first thinking about them. The scope and depth of his reflections on the Academy's Question were certainly not simply the result of what in later years he came to speak of as the inspiration of Vincennes (see p. 320). Rather, the Academy's Question seems to have suggested to him a way of ordering his thoughts, and to have given direction and a strong impetus to his further reflections. The *Discourse* which he submitted as his entry in the competition, and which won him that year's Prize, aroused intense debate throughout Europe. His occasional *Replies* to one or another critic give ample evidence of the comprehensiveness and the coherence of his position. He said that he did not encounter a single reasonable objection which he had not considered beforehand (*Last Reply* [2]*), and if one re-reads the *Discourse* in the light of the debate, one finds no reason to doubt him. Before long he came to speak of his "system," his "sad and great system" (*Narcissus* [13], *Second Letter* [6]). He seems to have meant no more by the expression than that his views were comprehensive and coherent. He did not ever deduce his "system" *more geometrico*, as, for example, Hobbes had sought to do. Like the most thoughtful of his characters, the love of truth kept him from systematizing [*l'esprit des systèmes*] (*NH* IV, 7, *OC* II, 427). This is one reason why his work has given rise to so many often contradictory, and occasionally downright bizarre, interpretations. He sets out some of his reasons for proceeding as he does in the early and important programmatic *Method of Composing a Book*, and he restates them most succinctly at the end of Part I of the *Discourse on Inequality* ([53]).

The formulation of the newly formed Dijon Academy's Question for its first Prize Essay competition, "Has the Restoration of the

Sciences and the Arts Contributed to the Purification of Morals?" may sound somewhat quaint and antiquated. Yet the problem which it raises is one which every thoughtful person of our time is forced to confront: does progress in the sciences and the arts promote – or even go hand in hand with – moral progress? The Academy's question would seem to suggest a "yes" or "no" answer. Rousseau restates the Question, and in the process changes its focus: Has progress in the arts and sciences led to moral progress or has it led to moral decline ([4])? It is this third, new, alternative that he chooses to defend: not only does progress in the arts and sciences fail to foster moral/political progress, it actively fosters its very opposite; and it does so always and necessarily. In awarding Rousseau's *Discourse* first place, the Dijon Academy expressly stated that it did so because it had answered the Question in the negative. The only other entry also to have done so took second place.

Rousseau's argument challenges head-on the premise of enlightenment, not just the premise of the Enlightenment, but what all of us would like to believe, that the unfettered public pursuit of the arts and sciences – of what we call "culture" – enhances men's moral and political life. In following his criticism of this view, it helps to keep in mind that he is primarily concerned with the effects of the arts and sciences on the public life, and that he consistently distinguishes between the pursuit of them in public by the public, and in private by individuals. His argument is not that all uncultured, savage or barbarous nations are necessarily morally/politically excellent, but that assigning priority to "culture" in the public life threatens and, in the long run, destroys freedom and justice. The most representative spokesmen for enlightenment immediately recognized the challenge. In the "Preliminary Discourse" to the great *Encyclopedia* which Rousseau's friend d'Alembert wrote the very same year in which Rousseau's own *Discourse* was taking Europe by storm, he raised the objection so many critics, then and now, have raised:

> . . . even assuming we were ready to concede the disadvantage of human knowledge, which is far from being our intention here, we are even farther from believing that anything would be gained from destroying it. We would be left the vices, and have ignorance in addition.

Rousseau fully grants the point. He never ceases repeating that there is no return. It is one of the constants of his thought that

once decline has set in, it will run its full course. However, it can be delayed.

The conclusion of his argument regarding the arts, reduced to its simplest form, is that they are bad for good societies, and good for bad ones (*Narcissus* [37]). His argument regarding the sciences, again reduced to its simplest form, is that the medium of public life is public opinion or fashionable prejudice, and that, as he puts in another context, for the most part opinions and prejudices are replaced by other opinions or prejudices, not by knowledge or by a reasoned suspension of judgment (*First Discourse* [2], [40], *Franquières* [2]). Moral/political excellence can, therefore, not be achieved – or even preserved – by the public pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, or by a so-called rational choice of enlightened self-interest, any more than it can be guaranteed to result from the working of institutions or procedures. It can only be achieved by everyone's recognizing the shared concern for the common interest or good as the organizing principle of their cares and pursuits, in short by the education – or re-education – of the passions. This is the premise underlying all of the arguments of the *First Discourse*.

Writing in absolutist France, Rousseau hesitated to go on and openly say that in his view the common weal consists in political freedom, that is to say in political self-rule. He says so indirectly in a number of ways, most immediately by identifying himself as a Citizen of Geneva, a Republic, on the very title page of the *Discourse*. The Dijon Academy understood him perfectly. In awarding the *Discourse* first prize, it took note of its strongly republican tone, and expressly stated that it was awarding it the prize in spite of it. From the principle that the common weal consists in political self-rule, it follows that anything that causes the citizens to be distracted from pursuing and preserving political freedom threatens it. That is why the pursuit of the arts and sciences to the neglect of civic virtue imperils political freedom. That is also why Rousseau rejects the modern argument that the unfettered pursuit of private interest only redounds to the public interest, the argument Mandeville summarized as "Private Vices, Public Benefits."

At a minimum, political freedom requires subordinating the private to the public good; and at its fullest, it requires finding one's private good in the public or common good. Insofar as subordinating the private to the common good requires an effort, it requires

virtue: "the strength [*force*] and vigor of the soul" (*First Discourse* [11], *Hero* [35]). While Rousseau tends, for the most part, to equate "virtue" with "civic virtue," he is fully aware of how restrictive this equation is. The competing claims of the intellectual and the civic virtues is a classical problem. He explores this problem in remarkable detail in the early *Discourse on Heroic Virtue*, and he returns to it in every one of his works. It is the theme of his repeated comparisons between Socrates and Cato, but also of the tension he describes between himself the solitary walker and himself the Citizen of Geneva. He never went as far as Kant in proclaiming the priority of the practical to the theoretical reason, but he significantly contributed to their re-ordering.

From the *First Discourse* onwards, Rousseau argues that the main reason why civic virtue is so difficult to achieve is that political society tends to force its members to seek their private good at the expense of their fellows, and hence of the common good; they need one another in order to prey on one another; they are therefore compelled to *be* one way, and to *seem* another (*Narcissus* [27]).

The question inevitably arises whether these conflicts – these "contradictions" as Rousseau himself sometimes calls them – are due to some flaw inherent in human nature, whether they are due to some flaw inherent in political society as such, or whether – and how – they might be avoided or mitigated. In short, how did they arise? It is therefore to the beginnings that Rousseau next turns.

In the so-called *Second Discourse* Rousseau describes himself as digging to the very roots of these problems (*Ineq.* I [47]). He wrote the *Discourse* between November 1773 and June 1754 in answer to another Prize Essay Question proposed by the Dijon Academy. The *First Discourse* had won the Academy's Prize, and had made him famous. The *Second Discourse* did not win the Prize, but it made him immortal. The question the Academy had proposed was: "What is the Origin of Inequality among Men, and is it Authorized by the Natural Law?" He begins by considering the key terms of that Question.

He distinguishes two kinds of inequality: "physical" inequality, by which he means not only inequality of bodily powers, but also, perhaps somewhat unexpectedly, of powers of mind, wisdom and virtue; and "moral" inequality, by which he means ruling and being

ruled on the basis of some form of agreement or consent (*Ineq.* I [2]). With this distinction he, in effect, turns the Academy's Question about the origin of inequality into a question about the origin of rule; and since political rule is the most authoritative and comprehensive form of rule, the Academy's "What is the Origin of Inequality?" in effect becomes "What is the Origin of Civil or Political Rule?"; and hence "What is the Origin of Civil or Political Society?" (P [11]). It is to this question that Rousseau devotes the major portion of the *Discourse.*

The Academy had gone on to ask whether inequality is authorized by the natural law, and this leads Rousseau into what proved to be his most comprehensive thematic discussion of "natural law." Once again, he begins with a distinction: natural law may be understood either as a law of nature to which all living beings are subject, or as the moral law to which only we humans, as free and rational agents, are subject. The Academy question manifestly refers to natural law understood as the moral law. Rousseau devotes his entire *Discourse* to proving that natural law so understood cannot account for the origin of political society, and of "moral" inequality. As for whether natural law "authorizes" political society and rule, he initially leaves this question open: in the title which he gives to his answer, *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men*, he recasts the Academy's Question, just as he had recast its earlier Question about the Arts and Sciences, by substituting the non-committal "foundations" for the Academy's "authorized by the natural law" (cp. p. 113 with p. 130). The substitution also incidentally alerts us to Rousseau's reluctance to speak about "natural law" when he speaks in his own name (see also the Introduction to *"The Social Contract" and other Later Political Writings*, edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch, hereafter referred to as *SC* tr.)

He very correctly remarks that everyone who has inquired into the bases of political society has been led to inquire into man's pre-political condition. He refers to this pre-political condition as the "state of nature," an expression introduced, for all intents and purposes, by Hobbes, who defines it as "the state of men without civil society," or without an acknowledged common superior on earth (*De cive*, Preface). While he adopts Hobbes's expression, his account of this state is sharply at odds with Hobbes's account of it.

Hobbes "very clearly saw the defect of all modern definitions of Natural right," namely that they assumed that man is by nature rational and political. Yet Hobbes goes on to commit essentially the same fallacy: he erroneously attributed to man in the state of nature passions and needs which he could only have acquired after the rise of reason and political society (*Ineq.* I [35]). Because of this fallacy, Hobbes erroneously concludes that the state of nature is a state of war of all against all. If it indeed were, then, Rousseau argues, mankind would have been forced to abandon it from the very first or to face extinction. Hobbes's fallacy prevents him from accounting for mankind's long, stable pre-civil existence. He spoke of savage man, but depicted civil man (*Ineq.* I [38]; *War* [8]).

Rousseau sets out to correct Hobbes's account by adhering to his premises more consistently than Hobbes himself had done. To this end, he conjectures what human nature must have been in "the embryo of the species," by so to speak "bracketing" all the changes which it must have undergone as reason and sociability develop. This reductive analysis leaves him with two principles prior to reason and independent of sociability, self-preservation and pity, which, in his view, suffice to allow men to act in conformity with natural right. Rousseau is not denying that men are rational or sociable; he denies that prior to the development of reason and sociability humans cannot act in conformity with natural right (see also the Introduction to *SC* tr.). By speaking about self-preservation and pity as "principles," Rousseau is calling attention to the fact that they manifest themselves in different forms at different stages of the development of individuals and of the species: thus "the principle of pity" assumes different forms in the *Discourse on Inequality*, in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (*Languages*, 9 [2]), and in the *Emile*. In the *Discourse* pity manifests itself primarily as a revulsion at inflicting or even witnessing hurt (*Ineq.* P [9], I [35]; cp. *Geneva ms.* II 4 [15]), and Rousseau goes so far as strongly to suggest a natural propensity to vegetarianism. However he also calls the reader's attention to the fact that the claims of self-preservation "legitimately" take precedence over the claims of pity (*Ineq.* P [10], I [38]), that the state of nature is a state of violence, and that the law of nature is the rule of the stronger (*Ineq.* E [4], II [56], *Poland* 13 [3]). Yet this law of the stronger does not lead to serious conflict,

let alone to Hobbes's war of all against all. "Everywhere the state of war prevailed, yet the whole earth was at peace" (*Languages* 9 [6]; *War*). For so long as men's passions are sluggish, their needs limited in number, and they can easily satisfy them on their own, being stronger makes little difference. Rousseau's radical reductive analysis is, as he will go on to show, therefore entirely consistent with the fact that for the greater part of recorded time, the greater part of mankind has lived "without civil society," and that this life "without civil society" has been remarkably stable, that, in other words, the pre-political state is indeed a state, a stable, enduring, and distinct condition of mankind.

There is ample evidence about the state of nature in the sense of mankind's pre-political state, and Rousseau avails himself of the ancient sources as well as of contemporary travelers' reports. Nevertheless he speaks of his account as "conjectural." In one respect his calling it that is a transparent rhetorical feint. A public inquiry into the origins inevitably has to come to terms with the Biblical account. Rousseau disposes of this challenge by inviting us *therefore* to set aside all the facts (*Ineq.* E [6]). Still, setting aside the Biblical account of the beginnings does not dispose of all difficulties. The historians' and the travelers' reports are hard to interpret because the pre-political life they describe is, clearly, not life at its most primitive. The Caribs may well be the one of all known peoples that has remained closest to the state of nature (*Ineq.* I [44]), but there is every reason to believe that they are not the most primitive humans simply. Rousseau therefore divides the pre-political state of nature into three stages separated by "revolutions" (cp. also *Languages* 9 [19]), and he assigns "most of the savage peoples known to us" (*Ineq.* II [17], cp. [18]) to the second of these stages. Since less evidence is available about the preceding stage, his account of it is, as he says, necessarily conjectural. So is his account of what he sometimes calls "the pure state of nature" (*Ineq.* E [5]), the state of man without – and conceivably prior to – "moral" relations of any kind, and hence without – and conceivably prior to – artifice or convention of any kind. His extensive discussion of this pure state of nature is necessarily conjectural because, as he remarks, it does not now exist, it may well not ever have existed in the past, and yet we have to have as clear a notion of it as possible (*Ineq.* P [4]). It does not now exist and it may not ever have existed because

human life may always, everywhere, and necessarily be a mixture of the natural and the artificial and conventional, and it may be perfectly natural that this be so. We would, then, not be able to point to a human being without – and conceivably prior to – all artifice and convention. Yet we would still want to know as clearly as possible what about being human is natural, and what artificial or conventional. We would therefore have to *conjecture* the "pure state of nature," and the early history of the species.

The basic principle of Rousseau's pre-political state of nature is that everyone in this state enjoys a balance between needs, and the resources and powers to satisfy them; and that everyone possesses the power to restore this balance when it has been upset. In the pre-political state of nature, everyone is self-sufficient. So long as each one's needs and powers are in balance, no one is drawn or driven by his nature to alter his state. So long as each one's needs and powers are in balance, even Hobbes's natural right of everyone to everything he might need or desire would not make for a Hobbesian state of war, and would therefore not force men to abandon the state of nature (*War* [11] *et seq.*). The balance between needs, inclinations, and the powers to satisfy them is in very large measure maintained or restored by what, in the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau calls "perfectibility" (*Ineq.* I [17]), "the specific characteristic of the human species" (*Ineq* N X [5]). Perfectibility is the mechanism which brings into play the faculties that will enable individuals and the species to establish a new balance between needs and powers when the previous balance between them has been irreversibly upset by a change in circumstances. The development of language plays a particularly important role in the working of perfectibility, if only because language is so intimately involved in the development of what Rousseau calls "moral" and we would now call "social" relations (*Ineq.* I [30] and Editorial Note; N X [5]; *Languages* I [13]). The term "perfectibility" invites misunderstanding. In spite of its name, and in contrast to teleological principles of explanation, perfectibility is not set and kept in motion by some inner dynamic or impulsion. Rather, it is triggered by changes in external circumstances, by what Rousseau therefore refers to as "accidents." Nevertheless, there is nothing haphazard about the course it follows. Rousseau consistently has human faculties – language, reason, the passions – and human associations – families, troops, tribes,

societies – develop always and everywhere in the same, familiar, order, "successively," and not at random or in a different order in different circumstances. Now, bringing faculties into play is one thing, perfecting the individual – let alone the species – whose faculties they are is quite another. In spite of its name, perfectibility does not perfect or even guide the use of the faculties it brings into play. Faculties are like tools and, like tools, they can be used for good or ill. It is at least as likely that we will misuse them as that we will use them well (*Voltaire* [8], [11]; *Languages* I [13]; *Conf.* VIII, *OC* I, 388).

Indeed, the faculties man develops and brings into play in order to deal with a given situation, the tools he fashions, the skills he acquires, the new ways he adopts, place at his disposal far more power than that situation required. The first time he used a stone it may have been to crack a nut; but stones do not for him become nutcrackers, they become hammers. The new faculties, skills and implements release powers and open up possibilities which far exceed the needs that occasioned them. Their use will not be confined to satisfying the original need. Instead, men will explore and use their new surplus powers and, in the process, create new, derivative needs, needs that soon override the primary needs in their urgency. This is Rousseau's point whenever he invites his reader to consider whether men might not be better off without the power – the faculties or the tools – to do ill as well as good than they are when they possess this power, and use it for ill.

The single most distinctive feature of Rousseau's original, natural man, and of men in the pre-political state of nature, is that they are "good." Rousseau always stressed that the doctrine of man's natural goodness was his central doctrine. It stands in clear opposition to the doctrine of original sin (*Ineq.* E [5], N IX [14]). Men in the pre-political state are naturally good in the sense that so long as each person's needs, inclinations and the powers to satisfy them are in balance, each can yield to his spontaneous inclination to self-preservation and to pity by attending to his own good without desiring and, for the most part, needing to harm anyone else (*Ineq.* I [38]). Rousseau's talk of natural, spontaneous goodness, and especially his stress on "pity" as constitutive of natural goodness, is apt to mislead readers into overlooking the flinty features of his pre-political state of nature, the fact that men's natural goodness is

perfectly compatible with fierceness, even with ferociousness, cruelty, and a considerable level of violence (*Ineq.* I [6], II [17], *Languages* 9 [1]). They may be fierce, ferocious and cruel, but they are no more wicked or vindictive than is a dog biting the stone that hit him (*Ineq.* I [39]). They are not wicked or vindictive for the same reason that they are not properly speaking just or magnanimous: their sense of self is not dependent on how others perceive them and, unlike men in Hobbes's state of nature, they are therefore not bent on besting anyone, let alone everyone. Natural goodness is, then, emphatically not beneficence, the inclination or the steady will to do another's good. Nor is it virtue, "the strength [*force*] and vigor of the soul" (*First Discourse* [11]), let alone the justice that consists in doing unto others as you would have them do unto you (*Ineq.* I [38]). Nothing in Rousseau's account of men in the pre-political state of nature justifies calling them "noble savages."

They are good because and insofar as they are self-sufficient. Rousseau criticizes Hobbes for presumably teaching that men are naturally wicked or evil, by assuming that their appetites are from the first and by nature unbounded, and in particular that they are from the first and by nature driven by what Hobbes calls "vanity" or "vainglory" and he himself calls *amour propre*, the passion to have others acknowledge us at the stock we set by ourselves. He argues that, on the contrary, *amour propre* and all other passions fueled by comparing ourselves to others are derivative, late acquisitions, which are fully developed and become imperious only in political society.

In the pre-political state of nature men are self-sufficient because and insofar as they are free and equal. They are free because they are not irreversibly dependent on another for the satisfaction of their material, psychological or social – Rousseau's "moral" – needs; and they are equal because their "physical" inequalities remain without "moral" import: they are equal because they are free. This pre-political non-dependence or "natural freedom" is associated with the deep-seated sentiment of freedom which for Rousseau comes close to defining being human (*Ineq.* II [41]). Hobbes has men driven to escape or to avoid the state of nature because it permanently threatens what he calls the greatest evil, violent death. Accordingly, on his view, the primary aim of civil society is peace. Rousseau, by contrast, has men drawn to remain in the pre-political

state of nature in order to avoid what he calls the worst that can happen in the relations between man and man, to find oneself at the discretion of another's arbitrary will (*Ineq.* II [37]). Accordingly, on his view, the primary aim of civil society is freedom. He fully recognizes, indeed he stresses, that the requirements for civil peace may be at odds with the requirements for civil freedom (*Ineq.* II [38], [39]; *SC* III 4 [7]; *Poland* I [3]).

Once men become irreversibly dependent on one another, Rousseau's pre-political state of nature breaks down. In the *Second Discourse* he conjectures that this breakdown was due to the "accidental" introduction of large-scale agriculture, with the attendant division of labor and enclosure, and he praises Moses for indicating his apparent disapproval of agriculture "by attributing its invention to a wicked man," Cain, the tiller of the ground who was also the founder of cities (*Languages* 9 [18]; *Genesis* 4:2–7). Control of any other primary natural resource on which all depend, would, of course, have led to the same result. In the *Social Contract* he therefore reduces the causes for the breakdown of the pre-political state of nature to the formula: no one can any longer attend to his preservation by himself alone (*SC* I 6 [1]). The loss of self-sufficiency thus leads to the division of labor which, in turn, leads to the irreversible loss of equality, because now the natural, "physical" inequalities in talents and strength which had always existed assume "moral", that is to say social, import. As a result, the cleverer or the stronger now enjoy advantages at the expense of the duller or weaker who are therefore now compelled to simulate qualities which they do not in fact possess. Before long inequalities in brain or brawn become inequalities between rich and poor, masters and slaves, rulers and ruled. The point of Rousseau's genealogy is clear: existing moral inequalities are fundamentally unjust. They are the result of unearned inequalities – being talented, or clever, or strong – used to one's own advantage at the expense of others. What is more, existing moral inequalities corrupt the advantaged and the disadvantaged alike. Conflict inevitably arose, which before long turned into a war of all against all.

Rousseau agrees with the earlier modern state-of-nature doctrines that civil society is instituted to remedy what they call "the inconveniences" (A Note on the Translations, p. xlvii below) of the state of nature. He disagrees with them by denying that these incon-

veniences manifest themselves from the first, or are due to an inherent flaw in human nature.

He conjectures that the war of all against all must have been brought to an end by a contract proposed by the rich to the poor: all would pool their forces to constitute a supreme power which would rule them according to law, and protect each and every member in the possession of what he has. Contrary to a widely held belief, Rousseau does not have society arise from this conjectural contract (*SC* IV 4 [1]); he does not deny that man is by nature sociable. What he denies is that man is by nature *political*; and what he has the contract institute is *political* society. He has non-political society arise so to speak naturally – he speaks of "beginning" and "nascent society" (*Ineq.* II [18]; cp. *Languages* 9 [34]–[36]) – and break down with the introduction of irreversible material and "moral" – that is to say social and psychological – dependence. Civil or political society comes into being as an artificial alternative to "natural" society torn apart by the intestine war which dependence inevitably causes. As "beginning" or "nascent" society gives way to the state of war, tradition and morals (*moeurs*) give way to the worst that can happen to one, dependence on another's arbitrary will. The contract substitutes the rule of law for the rule of morals and of arbitrary individual will. By conjecturing that political society must have begun by contract, Rousseau suggests that it must at all times have been at least tacitly recognized that only mutual consent could provide a basis for a just or legitimate civil order (cp. *Ineq.* II [31] with *SC* I 6 [5]). While this conjectured historical contract would have been just by virtue of being a contract, it was flawed – a "usurpation" – by freezing the inherently unjust inequalities between rich and poor that had given rise to the war of all against all, and hence to the need to institute political society, in the first place (see also *Pol. Ec.* [63]). In the process, the contract institutionalizes and sanctions a state of affairs which places individuals in contradiction with one another and themselves, and forces them to override their natural goodness, their inclination to do good for themselves with the least harm possible to others, by placing them in the position of having to do good for themselves at the expense of others. This is how men can be wicked while man is good (*Ineq.* N IX [2]; letter to Cramer, 13 Oct. 1764). They are so not because of some inherent flaw or fall or failing on their part, but because

political society is flawed in its very inception. In answer to the Academy's Question, Rousseau argues that the origin of inequality is the rule of the stronger in the form of the rule of the richer; and that, as such, it clearly is not "authorized" by the natural law, regardless of how that term may be understood (*Ineq.* II [31], [35], [58]).

The *Discourse on Inequality* does not explore how this state of affairs might be remedied, any more than it explores whether or on what terms civil or political society might be "authorized" or "legitimate." It has therefore left some readers under the impression that Rousseau thinks that the self-sufficient savage marks the peak of humanity (*Ineq.* II [18]), from which the civil state is an unqualified decline. This is certainly the immediate impression which he wishes to create (*Ineq.* E [7]). By comparison to his discussion of the state of nature, the discussion of the civil state which follows lacks drama. It is also significantly shorter. Yet it would be a mistake to neglect what he calls his "hypothetical history of governments," for it is, as he says, ". . . in all respects an instructive lesson for man" (*Ineq.* P [12]). He divides the civil state, as he had the state of nature, into three stages separated by "revolutions" and, again as in the state of nature, he situates the peak in the second or middle stage. He assigns that peak to democracy. In the body of the *Discourse* he says so as if only in passing. He sets forth his fullest account of a legitimate political order not in the body of the *Discourse*, but at its very beginning, under cover of the Epistle Dedicatory to Geneva, with its praise of the Roman People, "that model of all free Peoples" (ED [6]), and of wisely tempered democracy (ED [3], cp. *SC* III, 7 [5], 10 [3]* . . .). The constitution of "the Fatherland I would have chosen" which he sketches in that Epistle Dedicatory corresponds in all essentials to the legitimate political order which he depicts in full detail in the *Social Contract*.

The *Discourse* concludes with a comparison between the self-sufficient life in the state of nature and the other-dependent and other-directed life in the civil state, the in-gathered sentiment of one's own existence in the one, and the radically alienated, *amour-propre*-driven sense of self in the other. The comparison appears unconditionally to favor the first, and just as unconditionally to deprecate the second. This appearance is deceptive. Rousseau stresses that we owe to *amour propre* not only what is worst but also

what is best among men, conquerors as well as philosophers (*Ineq.* II [52]). He had made the same point in the *First Discourse* and in his *Replies* to its Critics. However, he does not develop it in any of these essentially diagnostic writings. He will develop it in what might by contrast be called the constructive political writings, where he will argue that *amour propre* can become the active principle and driving power of civic spiritedness and patriotism (*Pol. Ec.* [30], *Poland* 4 [1], [2]; Introduction to *SC* tr.). Nor does he here develop the extremely terse answer he finally gives to the Academy Question in the very last paragraph of the *Discourse*: only rule in proportion to merit satisfies the requirements of natural law in any sense of that term. In the very last of the Notes which he appended to the *Discourse*, he adds that political rule in proportion to wisdom and virtue – in other words, in strict conformity with the requirements of what the Dijon Academy means by "natural law" – has to be "authorized" by the sovereign people (see also *Narcissus* [19]). It clearly follows that, as he says in the Epistle Dedicatory ([18], [3]) and again in the *Social Contract* (III 5 [4], 7 [5], 10 [3]* . . .), the best government is democracy wisely tempered, or elective aristocracy (*SC* III 5 [4]; cp. *Ineq.* ED [18] [3]). He most fully illustrates how he conceives of political authority in proportion to merit in his *Considerations on the Government of Poland* (13).

Many years later, Rousseau wrote in his *Confessions* that ". . . in all of Europe [the *Discourse*] found only a very few readers who understood it, and of these none wished to talk about it" (*Conf.* VIII. *OC* I, 389). Since he does not go on to say what would constitute a correct understanding of it, the remark can be – and has been – cited in support of the most diverse interpretations. Although it was widely read and discussed, this *Second Discourse* did not occasion a public debate comparable to that occasioned by the *First Discourse*, in part because Rousseau did not directly enter the discussion in public. He drafted, but never mailed, replies to the critical comments by Charles Bonnet, writing under the pseudonym Philopolis, and by Charles-Georges Le Roy speaking in the name of Buffon. Both had challenged what they took to be the *Discourse*'s conception of the natural order and of man's place in it. However he did spell out his conception of the natural order and of man's place in it rather fully in a letter he sent to Voltaire about the latter's recently published *Poem on the Lisbon Disaster*. Man's place in the natural

order is again central to the reflections in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, and in an important footnote Rousseau returns to the specific issue which Le Roy-Buffon had raised about carnivores (*Languages* 9 [32]*). These four writings, together with the *Discourse*, thus form a coherent whole.

The immediate occasion for Voltaire's *Poem* was the devastating earthquake which struck Lisbon on Saturday, 1 November, All Saints' Day, 1755, and which was followed by tidal waves and extensive fires, causing the death of many thousands of people and destroying much of the city. The disaster made a deep impression throughout Europe. In light of it, Voltaire's *Poem* challenges, as its subtitle announces, "the axiom 'All is Good,'" the thesis of Leibniz's *Theodicy* that this is the best of all possible worlds, and of Pope's *Essay on Man* that "whatever is, is right," what was called "Optimism" at the time. "Optimism" was being much debated. The Berlin Academy had announced as the topic of its Prize competition for 1755 a thorough discussion of Pope's thesis, and Kant had considered submitting an essay to it. Now Voltaire, writing under the impact of the earthquake, charges that optimism fails to acknowledge or to account for the ills or evils (*maux*) that befall man. Rousseau, by contrast, casts himself as a defender of optimism, an optimism which any reader of the *Letter* immediately realizes has nothing in common with the pollyannish optimism Voltaire will deride in *Candide*. He had, after all, just a short time before referred to his "sad system." The aim of his *Letter* is twofold: once more to show that we can avoid most of the evils we suffer because they are of our making, and that the evils which we cannot avoid count for less than the goods we enjoy; and to vindicate our common-sense trust in what he calls "the ordinary course of things," and our belief or hope in the conformity between the order of things and our moral lives.

Rousseau does not deny that the Lisbon earthquake was a great calamity, or that our lives are beset by innumerable evils. He does take issue with Voltaire about what does and what does not count as an evil, and hence about how most responsibly to depict and discuss evils. Voltaire's *Poem* depicts evils which human prudence could prevent or at least mitigate as if they could only have been prevented by an omnipotent God who chose not to prevent them. It therefore leaves us feeling forsaken and dejected. By contrast,

Rousseau sides with Leibniz and Pope, who show God combining the most good(s) with the fewest evils possible – ". . . if he did not do better, it is that he could not do better" ([5]) – and thus leave us feeling reconciled and even hopeful. Faced with the alternative between divine beneficence and divine omnipotence, Rousseau publicly opts for the first.

The general physical evils that are, so to speak, in the nature of things – primarily death and pain – are few in number, and of comparatively little importance, especially once we recognize that they are unavoidable. Most generally, evils are unavoidable because the whole is made up of heterogeneous parts, and the good of one part – or kind or species – differs from that of another, and hence from the good of the whole ([8], [21], [23]; *War* [42]; *Philopolis* [11]). We cannot avoid, undo or overcome such evils. We can only accommodate to them more or less adequately.

Strictly speaking, the question of philosophical optimism is independent of the question of Providence. In a discussion of these very same issues in the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau had said that man suffers almost only evils he has brought on himself, and that therefore Nature – he makes no mention there of Providence – is justified (*Ineq.* N IX [1]; cp. *Narcissus* [30]). Still, it is not difficult to see how a discussion of the origin of evil readily turns into a discussion of Providence. Now, in the terms which he adopts in the *Letter to Voltaire*, Rousseau argues that Providence makes for the best world possible, and – therefore – not for a world which is unqualifiedly good. Providence is "universal," and – therefore – not particular ([25]).

Rousseau recognizes that even universal Providence, the proposition that the species is a part of the best-ordered whole possible, and – therefore – subject to the fewest and least constraints or evils possible, is no more than an assumption ([23]). Voltaire does not grant it. For him the whole is not well ordered unless sentient beings, and in particular human beings, enjoy a privileged place in it. In his view, a whole to which his death contributes by having his mortal remains serve as food for worms is not simply well ordered. The difference between the two is that for Voltaire the whole should accommodate to man, whereas for Rousseau man must accommodate to the whole. However, the claim that we suffer more evils than we enjoy goods is disingenuous even on Voltaire's

terms. It fails to take into account "the sweet sentiment of existence" ([11]). If he took it into account, Voltaire would recognize that, in the full context of our lives, the goods we enjoy outweigh the unavoidable general evils we suffer. What is more, the sweet sentiment of existence clearly provides a privileged place for man among the beings, and thus establishes a clear presumption in favor of even the kind of Providence Voltaire demands. Rousseau goes so far as to argue that the sentiment of one's own existence also establishes a presumption in favor of the immortality of the individual soul ([26]).

The link between immortality of the individual soul and our sense of justice is readily enough apparent. We believe that justice calls for happiness in proportion to moral desert. We know that it is not always so. Yet our moral life rests on the trust that what is conforms to what should be. We may therefore be moved to hope that it might prove to be so, and hence to hope that the soul is immortal. As Voltaire remarked in the concluding note to his *Poem*, men entertained this hope "even before they enjoyed the assistance of revelation." It has also always and everywhere been recognized that the hope – or the fear – that the individual soul might be immortal and subject to rewards and punishments can serve as a powerful bulwark to moral conduct. It may encourage the righteous, and deter the wicked. Rousseau takes up Glaucon's and Adeimantos's challenge to Socrates: in the absence of immortality and of natural sanctions, would not a person acting justly to his detriment be a fool, and only a person acting unjustly to his benefit prove rational ([26]; cp. Plato, *Republic* II, 359b–362c; *Franquières* [22]; *Geneva ms.* I 2 [10]; *SC* I 6 [2])?

The question of Providence is a corollary of questions about the existence and nature of God. Rousseau had acknowledged that there are reasons for doubting the immortality of the soul (*Voltaire* [26]). He now acknowledges as much regarding the existence of God ([29]). The rational thing to do would, therefore, be to suspend judgment regarding God's existence. Yet he rejects this option. More precisely, he denies that it is an option. For, he says, he cannot bear to remain in doubt about questions of vital importance. Since the unaided human reason cannot resolve the question, he falls back on sentiment. He develops this argument – if that is the proper term for this rejection of argument – in the important para-

graph immediately following, in which he goes on to tell how profoundly struck he had been by Diderot's showing that the order of the universe can be accounted for by matter, motion and chance, without invoking a prime mover or a prior principle of order, in other words by a somewhat refined Epicureanism ([30]). He omitted this paragraph from the copy of the *Letter* which he sent to Voltaire, as well as from the version of it which he eventually allowed to be published. He did make the same point on a number of other occasions (e.g. *Franquières* [11]), but never publicly in his own name. It is clear why he would have hesitated to do so: as he goes on to say, he knows of no conclusive refutation of it. If he nevertheless rejects it, he does so not because he thinks it false, but because it clashes so radically with our ordinary, common-sense experience, and with our trust or hope that the world makes sense, that we could not live by it. The *Second Discourse* is proof that he does not simply reject it. As he puts it in a formula he also uses in a number of other important contexts, he is convinced but not persuaded by Diderot's Epicurean account. For all practical purposes the contrast between being convinced and being persuaded corresponds to the contrast he draws a few lines later between proofs by demonstration and proofs of sentiment. In both cases, ordinary experience or inclination points one way, and demonstration or argument points another; in both cases, ordinary experience or inclination prevails; and, Rousseau argues, in both cases it must be heeded. For ordinary experience makes for our stubborn trust in the stability and order of our world, and appears to point to what might be called "cosmic support for our humanity" or "Providence," and thus to hallow necessity. Respect for this trust intensifies our common sense of what several times in this *Letter* Rousseau calls "the ordinary course of things"; to challenge it, as Voltaire does, in the name of alternatives that are not certain and make no useful difference therefore is, as Rousseau repeatedly says, simply cruel ([6], [30]). It is far more cruel than the various physical evils which Voltaire finds so cruel ([10]), because, by undermining our trust in the common world of common sense, it causes us to become disenchanted and detached from it. In criticizing Voltaire's poem, Rousseau is indirectly also criticizing Diderot's Epicurean account. He honeys the cup, and seeks to counteract the disenchantment and detachment to which their views lead, by shifting the focus inward, away

from the natural world around us toward our sentiments, and most particularly toward the sentiment of our existence. This shift significantly contributed to the shift away from cosmological arguments for the existence of God, and from religion to religiosity. It corresponds to the distinction between being convinced and being persuaded, and to the distinction between proofs by demonstration and proofs of sentiment. These shifts and distinctions succinctly mark the limits of possible enlightenment, and in particular of a politics that would be rigorously rational.

Rousseau categorically rejects the possibility of a political society of atheists, although he readily concedes that there may be individual virtuous atheists, as his very sympathetic depiction of M. de Wolmar in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* amply proves. Since a sound political society requires what, in the *Social Contract*, he will call a "civil religion," he invites Voltaire to elaborate the rudiments of the religion of sentiment which he has been sketching in this *Letter* into a Catechism of the Citizen. Religious beliefs can be required, they cannot be enforced. It would be inhumane and unreasonable to try to enforce them. Only conduct can be enforced. Rousseau invariably draws a sharp line between enforcing belief and enforcing conduct, and in particular he consistently rejects every form of religious intolerance. For, as he says here, and as he will say again in the chapter on Civil Religion of the *Social Contract*, people who think their fellows are damned will subject them in this life to the treatment they say the Devil has in store for them in the next.

The *Letter to Voltaire* once again shows that Rousseau is preeminently a political writer not in the sense that he restricts himself to narrowly political issues or problems, but in the sense that even when he is as it were forced to speak about the most comprehensive questions, about the sum or the order of the beings, or about God, freedom and immortality, he invariably remains mindful of common experiences, beliefs and practices, in other words of the requirements of political life. He does not leave it at saying that the requirements of political life ought to be acknowledged, he acknowledges them in fact, in his own name, or, more precisely, in the first person. For the fact that he presents his discussions dramatically and in the first person does not entitle us to attribute to him the conclusions which he attributes to the first person. He may have the first person speak on behalf of sound sentiment or sound popu-

lar opinion. In the *Discourse on Heroic Virtue* he notes that "Nothing is as categorical as ignorance, and doubt is as rare among the People as assertion [*l'affirmation*] is among true Philosophers" [13]. Only someone who thinks it possible and desirable to suspend judgment when reason cannot decide would make such a statement. Yet in the *Letter to Voltaire* the first person claims to find it intolerable to suspend judgment regarding the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, and that this, not reason, is why it chooses the consoling alternative. In doing so it speaks on behalf of those who are not familiar with scientific claims that are at odds with common experience, or who cannot understand them ([14], [18]), just as in the *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts* the first person was "an honest man who knows nothing and esteems himself none the less for it" ([4]).

Chronology of Jean-Jacques Rousseau

1712 — 28 June, born in Geneva; the second son of the watchmaker Isaac Rousseau and his wife Suzanne Bernard; both parents are "citizens" of Geneva; on 7 July his mother dies.

1722–1728 — Isaac Rousseau flees Geneva after a quarrel; his sons, who had received no formal education, were apprenticed. Jean-Jacques worked briefly as a notary's clerk, and then (1725–1728) as apprentice to an engraver.

1728–1740 — One night in March 1728, Rousseau finds himself locked out of Geneva, and decides to seek his fortune elsewhere; goes to Annency in the Savoy, where he meets Mme. de Warens. She sends him to Turin, where he renounces Calvinism and converts to Roman Catholicism (briefly attending a seminary for priests, then a choir school). Works intermittently as a lackey, an engraver, and a music teacher. Becomes Mme. de Warens's lover (1733–1740) and begins to write while living with her.

1740–1741 — Tutor in the house of M. de Mably, in Lyon, where he also makes the acquaintance of de Mably's two elder brothers, Etienne Bonnot, who comes to be known as the Abbé de Condillac, and the Abbé de Mably.

1742–1749 — Arrives in Paris with a scheme of musical notation, a comedy, an opera, and a collection of poems. During

	these years Rousseau made a precarious living tutoring, writing, and arranging music. For a time (1743–1744) he is secretary to the Comte de Montaigu, France's ambassador to Venice. Befriends Diderot, who commissions him to write the articles on music for the *Encyclopedia*; meets Thérèse Levasseur, who becomes his life-long companion.
1750	Wins the prize from the Academy of Dijon for his so-called *First Discourse* (*Discours sur les sciences et les arts*), published in January 1751, and an immediate, resounding success throughout Europe.
1752	His short opera, *Le Devin du village* (*The Village Soothsayer*), is performed at Court; a comedy, *Narcisse*, performed at the Théâtre Français; refuses a royal pension.
1753	*Lettre sur la musique française* (*Letter about French Music*), expressing a strong preference for Italian over French music.
1754–1755	The so-called *Second Discourse* (*Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*) completed in May 1754. On 1 June, Rousseau leaves Paris for a visit to Geneva, where he returns to Protestantism; his rights as citizen of Geneva are restored. Back in Paris in October. The *Discourse* is published in May 1755. In November the *Political Economy* appears in volume v of Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopedia*.
1756	Leaves Paris, and settles in a cottage, The Hermitage, on the estate of Mme. d'Epinay. Begins writing his novel *Julie*.
1758	*Letter to M. d'Alembert* (*Lettre sur les spectacles*) critical of d'Alembert's article on Geneva in the *Encyclopedia*, and in particular of his proposal to open a theater in Geneva. The publication of the *Letter* made final his break with most of the *philosophes*.
1761	Publication of the epistolary novel *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, which becomes a runaway best-seller.
1762	Publication of *Du contrat social* (15 May) as well as of *Emile* (22 May). Both are condemned and ordered to

	be publicly burned in Geneva as well as in France; the French government orders Rousseau's arrest; he flees to Neuchâtel, then governed by Prussia.
1763–1765	While in Neuchâtel, Rousseau renounces his Genevan citizenship. He writes a draft of a constitution for Corsica; is fiercely attacked by Voltaire in an anonymous pamphlet; and decides to write his autobiography, the *Confessions*.
1765	Spends some weeks of intense happiness on the island of Saint Pierre in the Lac de Bienne.
1765–1767	Under increasing attack wherever he seeks refuge, he accepts David Hume's offer of help to settle in England. (Falsely) suspecting Hume of having had a hand in writing an anonymous pamphlet ridiculing him, he quarrels with him and returns to France (although the order for his arrest had not been rescinded).
1768	While living under an assumed name, Renou, he marries his long-time companion Thérèse Levasseur, by whom he had had five children, all of whom he had left at a home for foundlings.
1772	He writes the *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne*, and *Dialogues: Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*, neither of which gets published at this time.
1777	Writes the *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*.
1778	Dies quite suddenly on 2 July.
1782	Publication of the Du Peyrou-Moultou edition of the *Works* which incorporates many of Rousseau's additions and corrections, and makes public for the first time his autobiographical writings, a number of his later political writings, as well as many shorter works, fragments and letters.
1794	Rousseau's ashes are transferred to the Panthéon.

A brief guide to further reading

The elegant five volumes of the Pléiade Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres complètes* (or *OC*; for details, see A Note on the Texts, p. xliii), make available in a convenient and compact format the most complete collection of Rousseau's published and unpublished writings. The different texts were assigned to different editors, and accordingly the extensive critical apparatus and annotations vary in usefulness. Also, unfortunately not all the texts are entirely reliable: aside from inevitable typographical errors, some of which remain uncorrected in printing after printing, not all – not even all important – variants are recorded; capitalization is not consistently faithful to Rousseau's original, or modernized uniformly throughout the edition. Close readers will therefore also have to consult the most authoritative editions of individual works: George R. Havens's critical edition of the *First Discourse*, Heinrich Meier's critical edition of the *Second Discourse*, and the various classical critical editions of the *Social Contract*. For full details about these editions, see the beginning of the Editorial Notes for each work. The most complete guide to Rousseau editions, printings, and translations up to 1950 is Jean Sénelier's *Bibliographie générale des oeuvres de J.-J. Rousseau* (PUF, Paris, 1950).

Ralph A. Leigh's critical apparatus and annotations in his magisterial *Correspondance complète* (for details, see A Note on the Texts, p. xliii) make his edition a doubly invaluable source.

References to standard translations of most of Rousseau's more important works are included in the Editorial Notes. Rousseau's major political writings which are not included in the present

volume will be found in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *'The Social Contract' and Other Later Political Writings*, translated, with an Introduction and Notes, by Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, 1997).

The *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1905–) publish articles, reviews and notices of particular interest to Rousseau scholars; so, frequently, do *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (1955–).

The North American Association for the Study of Jean-Jacques Rousseau publishes a Bulletin and holds Symposia, the Proceedings of which are published under the title *Pensée libre.*

The secondary literature about Rousseau's life and works is enormous. The following list is no more than a highly selective, preliminary guide to further reading. It concentrates on – but is not limited to – works about Rousseau's political philosophy; and it concentrates on – but is not limited to – works in English. Numerous other, often more specialized references, will be found in the Editorial Notes. The bibliographies in the works listed here and in those Notes will guide the interested reader further, as will Peter Gay's "Reading about Rousseau: A Survey of the Literature," in his *The Party of Humanity* (Knopf, New York, 1964), pp. 211–238.

Although, or perhaps because, he wrote several autobiographies, of which the *Confessions* is the best known and most complete, Rousseau has been a favorite subject of biographers. Two biographies stand out for their balance: Jean Guéhenno's *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Gallimard, Paris, 1962; translated by John and Doreen Weightman, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1966), and the two volumes which Maurice Cranston lived to complete, *Jean-Jacques, The Early Life and Work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1712–1754* (Allan Lane, London, 1983) and *The Noble Savage, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1754–1762* (Viking/Penguin, London and University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991). Sir Gaven de Beer's *Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his World* (Putnam's, New York and Thames & Hudson, London, 1972) may be consulted for its numerous, mostly eighteenth-century images of persons, places and memorabilia associated with Rousseau. Jean Starobinski's *J.-J. Rousseau, La Transparence et l'obstacle* (Plon, Paris, 1957, second, expanded edition, Gallimard, Paris, 1971), translated as *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988), is the best,

and the best-known, attempt to understand Rousseau's writings in the light of the kind of person he is supposed to have been, and to construct the kind of person he is supposed to have been on the basis of his writings; it focuses on the "images, obsessional desires, nostalgias, that dominate Jean Jacques' conduct and almost permanently guide his actions"; it does not attend to his thought as such. By contrast, Christopher Kelly's *Rousseau's Exemplary Life, the "Confessions" as Political Philosophy* (Cornell Univerity Press, Ithaca, 1987) reads Rousseau's account of his life in the light of his thought.

The most reliable and accessible accounts in English of Rousseau's thought as a whole are Charles W. Hendels's *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Moralist* (2 vols., Oxford Univerity Press, London and New York, 1934; second edition, Library of Liberal Arts, New York, 1962); and Robert Wokler's *Rousseau*, in the Past Masters series (OUP, Oxford, 1995), a lively, succinct distillation of the author's extensive acquaintance with the texts, the secondary literature and the period. Two French studies of Rousseau's work as a whole belong on even a short list of books about Rousseau: Pierre Burgelin's massive *La Philosophie de l'existence de J.-J. Rousseau* (PUF, Paris, 1952), and Tzvetan Todorov's compact *Frêle bonheur, essai sur Rousseau* (Hachette, Paris, 1985); so do two general studies in German: Martin Rang, *Rousseaus Lehre vom Menschen* (Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1959), which surveys the entire *oeuvre* from the perspective of the *Emile*, and Iring Fetscher's illuminating and reliable *Rousseaus politische Philosophie* (Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, Neuwied, 1960), which called attention to the difficulties raised by Rousseau's apparently inconsistent accounts of "pity" in the *Second Discourse* and in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* long before this became an issue in the French-language debates.

The most influential modern study of Rousseau's political philosophy is Robert Derathé's *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la science politique de son temps* (Vrin, Paris, 1970). One of the strengths of this study and of Derathé's numerous other contributions to Rousseau scholarship is his consistent attention to the coherence and the cogency of Rousseau's thought. Among earlier discussions in English of Rousseau's political philosophy, much can be learned from T. H. Green's *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* (first

delivered in 1879, and first published posthumously in R. L. Nettleship's edition of Green's *Works* [OUP, London and New York, 1886], vol. II, pp. 307–553; paperback reprint, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1967), Bernard Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the State* (Macmillan, London, 1899), and C. E. Vaughan's "Introduction" to his *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Political Writings* (CUP, Cambridge, 1915, reprint Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1962, vol. I, pp. 1–117). Judith N. Shklar's *Men and Citizens* (CUP, Cambridge, 1969) seeks to capture and convey the tenor of what her sub-title calls Rousseau's "social theory." Roger Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1968), provides detailed analyses of each of the major works. John C. Hall's concise and lucid *Rousseau; An Introduction to his Political Philosophy* (Schenkman, Cambridge, MA and Macmillan, London, 1972) concludes with a brief but helpful discussion of "Some Modern Applications"; A. M. Melzer's *The Natural Goodness of Man* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1990) explores Rousseau's political philosophy thoroughly and thoughtfully; Zev M. Trachtenberg, *Making Citizens* (Routledge, London and New York, 1993) pays special attention to the role Rousseau attaches to morals (*moeurs*), and reviews the claims that the "general will" is best understood in the light of theories of "rational choice"; Tracy B. Strong, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Politics of the Ordinary* (Sage, London, 1994) is an eclectic, wide-ranging, and spirited exploration of the work by perhaps the only scholar who proclaims himself a "Rousseauian."

Kant acknowledged how indebted his moral thought was to Rousseau. This has unfortunately misled some academics to portray him as a lisping Kant. In an influential article, Eric Weil even went so far as to claim that "it took Kant to *think Rousseau's thoughts*" ("J.-J. Rousseau et sa politique," *Critique* [January 1952], 56:3–28, reprinted in *Essais et Conférences* [Plon, Paris, 1971], vol. II, pp. 115–148). The best-known summaries of the influence of Rousseau on Kant's moral thought are Ernst Cassirer's balanced *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (originally published in 1932; translated by Peter Gay, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1963) and "Kant and Rousseau," in *Rousseau, Kant, Goethe* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1945). It remained for Richard L. Velkley's original, learned and absorbing *Freedom and the End of Reason*

(Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1989) to show Rousseau's profound and pervasive influence on Kant's critical philosophy as a whole. Andrew Levine's thoughtful *The Politics of Autonomy: A Kantian Reading of Rousseau's Social Contract* (University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1976) is mindful of the differences between Rousseau and Kant; however his Kant is, as the author announces from the first, Marxicized by way of Althusser; see also his recent *The General Will: Rousseau, Marx, Communism* (CUP, Cambridge, 1993); Louis Althusser's analytic-Marxist reading, "Sur le Contrat Social (Les décalages)," *Cahiers pour l'analyse* (1970), 8:5–42), translated by B. Brewster, is included in his *Montesquieu, Rousseau, Marx: Politics and History* (Verso, London, 1982); Michel Launay, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau écrivain politique* (CEL/ACER, Grenoble, 1972) views Rousseau's political writings from what might, by contrast, be called an historical-Marxist perspective, in the light of a very detailed account of the political circumstances in which they were composed.

The debate about whether Rousseau's legitimate, well-constituted State is what is now often called totalitarian goes at least as far back as the debates about the relation between his thought and the French Revolution and especially the Terror. The most conspicuous attacks on him on this score are Edmund Burke's, particularly in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), in which Burke did, however, also recognize that Rousseau himself "would be shocked at the practical frenzy of his scholars"; and by Benjamin Constant, especially in his *Principles of Politics* (1815) and his *Liberty of the Ancients as compared with that of the Moderns* (1819), both translated by B. Fontana in *Constant, Political Writings* (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, 1988); for a review of the debate, see J. W. Chapman, *Rousseau: Totalitarian or Liberal?* (AMS Press, New York, 1968); a widely influential argument for the view that Rousseau laid the foundation for "totalitarian democracy" is made by J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (Secker & Warburg, London, 1952; paperback reprint, Praeger, New York, 1960); however, the most tenacious contemporary critic of Rousseau's presumably totalitarian teaching and personality is Lester G. Crocker, for example in his *Rousseau's Social Contract, An Interpretive Essay* (Case Western Reserve Press, Cleveland, 1968); Richard Fralin, *Rousseau and*

Representation (Columbia University Press, New York, 1978) examines one of the central problems in this all-too-often highly polemical debate with scrupulous care.

For the study of Rousseau's thoughts about foreign policy, J. L. Windenberger, *Essai sur la politique étrangère de J.-J. Rousseau* (Picard et Fils, Paris, 1900) remains indispensable; see also Grace G. Roosevelt, *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1990); and the "Introduction" by Stanley Hoffmann and David P. Fidler to their anthology of Rousseau writings, *Rousseau on International Relations* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1991).

Among the works devoted to individual texts, Leo Strauss's study of the *First Discourse*: "On the Intention of Rousseau," *Social Research* (1947), 14:455–487, reprinted in Maurice Cranston and Richard S. Peters, eds., *Hobbes and Rousseau* (Doubleday, New York, 1972), pp. 254–290, stands out; John Hope Mason has written a "Reading Rousseau's First Discourse," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (1987), 249:251–266; Patrick Coleman's *Rousseau's Political Imagination: Rule and Representation in the 'Lettre à d'Alembert'* (Droz, Geneva, 1984) should be mentioned in this context; my own "Rousseau on the Arts and Sciences," *The Journal of Philosophy* (1972), 69:737–754 develops and documents in detail some of the points I make in the Introduction to this volume. Among the works devoted to the *Second Discourse*, Arthur O. Lovejoy's "The Supposed Primitivism of Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*" (1923), in *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1948) did much to alert readers to the distinction Rousseau draws between different stages of the state of nature; Victor Goldschmidt's *Anthropologie et politique: Les Principes du système de Rousseau* (Vrin, Paris, 1974) provides the most detailed commentary on this *Discourse*; I have discussed some of the difficulties in interpreting the *Second Discourse* in "Rousseau's 'Pure' State of Nature," *Interpretation* (1988), 16:23–59. The single most sustained interpretation of the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* is Jacques Derrida's often insightful and just as often willful reading of that text: *De la grammatologie* (Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1967), translated by Gayatri C. Spivak as *Of Grammatology* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1976); Robert Wokler's *Rousseau on Society, Politics, Music and Language* (Garland, New York, 1987) is valuable; I have discussed the *Essay* in "'The First

Times' in Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* (1986), 11:123–146, and in "The Political Argument of Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*," in *Pursuits of Reason, Essays in Honor of Stanley Cavell* (Texas Tech. University Press, Lubbock, 1993), pp. 21–36. Two very different commentaries on the *Social Contract* are particularly helpful: Maurice Halbwachs's *Rousseau, Du contrat social* (Aubier, Paris, 1943), and Hilail Gildin's *Rousseau's Social Contract: The Design of the Argument* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1983).

A note on the texts

The present collection brings together most of Rousseau's most important "political" writings, as well as some briefer polemical writings, and a few fragments and letters which shed light on the more formal, finished texts. By and large they appear here and in the companion volume, *The Social Contract and other Later Political Writings*, in the order in which they were written or published.

Some of the material included in this collection was not originally published by Rousseau himself, and it is not in all cases clear that he intended it to appear in print. Its inclusion therefore calls for at least a brief comment. We simply can no longer read and try to understand Rousseau exactly as he himself chose to present his thought and his person, and as his contemporaries came to know them. Many important drafts and fragments which he discarded or suppressed have been discovered in the course of the past two centuries. In addition, some fifty massive volumes of his correspondence have been published. Purists may regret the incorporation into his *oeuvre* of this material. Yet no conscientious student of Rousseau can simply ignore it, if only because much of it develops or illumines what he did publish or intend for publication. At the same time, conscientious scholars will take into account whether – and why – he may or may not have intended a given passage or text to be made public. Many of his better-known letters are short essays about important aspects of his thought. That is why they are well known. He fully expected that they would be made public, either by their addressees – a number of whom did, in fact, circulate and publish letters they had received from the by now famous Rous-

seau – or by himself. He certainly did not write the few letters included in this collection to unburden himself or to confide his inmost thoughts. He wrote them, as he repeatedly points out, in order to fulfill a moral obligation, to help or to benefit his addressees. They are as carefully crafted as his explicitly public writings. They, too, are politic.

The present standard edition of Rousseau's works is the five-volume Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres complètes*, edited by B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond (Pléiade, Paris, 1959–1995). In order to make it easier for readers to check the translation against the original, I introduced the practice of providing volume and page references to this edition: for example, *OC* III, 202–204, refers to pages 202–204 of volume III in the Pléiade *Oeuvres complètes*; [*202*] in the body of a translation indicates that what follows corresponds to page 202 of that volume of the Pléiade edition. A number of other translators have since felt free also to adopt this practice. In order further to facilitate cross-references, I have numbered Rousseau's paragraphs: *SC* III 2 [1] refers to the first paragraph in the second chapter of the third book of the *Social Contract*.

The present standard edition of Rousseau's correspondence is Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Correspondance complète*, collected, edited, and annotated by R. A. Leigh (Institut et Musée Voltaire, Geneva and The Voltaire Foundation at the Taylor Institution, Oxford, 1965–1989); all references to this remarkable work are abbreviated *CC*, followed by the Roman numeral indicating the volume, and the Arabic numeral(s) indicating the page(s).

A note on the translations

Rousseau is a writer of uncommon range and power. Kant, the sober Kant, said that his writing so swept him away that he could not attend to his argument upon a first reading. No translation can hope to do justice to his original. My aim has therefore been no more than to render what he said and how he said it as faithfully and as unobtrusively as possible.

He was aware that understanding his writings may require effort. He repeatedly calls for attentive readers (e.g. *Ineq.* I [53]; *SC* III I [1]), and on at least one occasion he expressly invites us to re-read him with care (*Poland* 14 [3]; see also *Ineq.*, Notice about the Notes). In a letter to Mme. d'Epinay he tells her that she will have to "learn my dictionary" because "my terms rarely have their usual meaning" (March 1756, *CC* III, 296). All of his readers have to learn his dictionary. The following brief remarks are no more than preliminary notes for it.

Art, "art": see *First Discourse* [5], Editorial Note.

Bon (adj.), *bonté* (n.), *bien* (n., adv.), "good," "goodness," "good(s)" and "well," together with their antonyms, are key terms for Rousseau. For a brief comment about translating them, see the Editorial Note to *Letter to Voltaire* [3].

For the most part, I have translated *liberté* as "freedom," and *affranchir* as "to free" (serfs); but *affranchissement*, "freeing," sometimes has to be "manumission."

Morale (n.) means ethics; *moralité* (n.), "morality"; and, much of the time, *moral* (adj.), "moral," simply means what we mean by that term, namely whatever pertains to what is morally right or

wrong. However, often Rousseau also uses "moral" in contrast to "physical." We still do so as well, when we say that we have a moral certainty, to indicate that we believe something to be the case although we have no "physical" evidence to support that belief (cp. *Voltaire* [38]). More generally, Rousseau follows Pufendorf in speaking of "moral persons," associations, institutions, corporations which have no physical existence properly so called, but owe their existence to agreements, covenants, contracts, or to shared beliefs, opinions, attitudes, to *moeurs*, "morals" or ways of life; such "moral persons" may perfectly intelligibly be said to pursue corporate ends or goods, and to possess a corporate will. *Moral* and *moeurs* are closely related: Pufendorf derives *moeurs* from *moral*; Burlamaqui derives *moral* from *moeurs*. *Moeurs* is notoriously difficult to translate. No single English word consistently means "shared public morality." "Manners" might seem plausible, but the burden of Rousseau's numerous discussions of *moeurs* is the discrepancy between manners and morals. From the *First Discourse* onwards, his constant concern is with this moral core of *moeurs*: he understands the Dijon Academy's Question about the impact of the arts and sciences on *moeurs* as a question about their impact on the moral tastes, dispositions, judgments, conduct, characteristic of a community's way of life. That is one reason why I have almost always translated *moeurs* as "morals." Admittedly, *moeurs* can also mean "customs" or "ways," as does its Latin root, *mores*. However, Rousseau distinguishes between *moeurs* and customs (e.g. in *Narcissus* [15]*; *SC* II 12 [5]). In a few rare cases – as when Le Roy speaks of the mating *moeurs* of partridges, deer and wolves (in the last line of his remarks about the *Second Discourse*); and when Rousseau speaks of the savages' ferocious *moeurs* (*Languages* 9 [5]) – I have translated *moeurs* as "ways." Although on one occasion Rousseau speaks of *moeurs* as one kind of law (*SC* II 12 [5]), he consistently adheres to the traditional distinction between *moeurs* and laws. Pre-political – barbarous and savage – peoples live by *moeurs* alone, whereas *civil*-ized peoples live also according to law strictly and properly so called (*Ineq.* II [15], [20]; *Languages* 5 [5]). Indeed, law more than anything else defines civil society, and hence being *civil*-ized. At the same time, Rousseau would fully agree with Montesquieu that ". . . a people invariably knows, loves, and defends its morals more than its laws" (*Spirit of the Laws* X 11). One more

important reason for translating *moeurs* as "morals" is that what Rousseau calls *moeurs* is very precisely what Kant calls *Sitten*, and Kant's *Sitten* is traditionally, and rightly, translated "morals" (as, for example, in *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*).

Patrie is now most commonly translated by "country," as in "my country." Yet "country" will not do, because Rousseau contrasts *patrie* and *pays*, "fatherland" and "country," and those who have a country (*pays*), even if they cannot be said to have a fatherland (*patrie*) (*Emile* V, *OC* IV 858; cp. *NH* VI 5, *OC* II, 657). I have therefore consistently rendered *patrie* as "fatherland." "Fatherland" also preserves the traditional suggestion that citizenship bears a certain similarity to a filial relationship – filial, not necessarily paternal: in spite of its etymology, it is feminine (*la patrie*); and Rousseau does not hesitate to speak of the *mère patrie*, the mother fatherland (*Pol. Ec.* [34]; *Poland* 3 [8]). Unfortunately "fatherland" does not capture the echo of *patrie* which Rousseau also wants his reader to hear in "patriotism." No English word does.

Science: see *First Discourse* [5], Editorial Note.

In a number of cases I have tried to preserve some of the associations of the original: *force* (n.) means "strength" as well as "force." I have tried to render it as consistently as possible by "force." In part I have done so simply to keep before the reader's eyes how very frequently Rousseau uses "force" and cognates; in part I have done so in order to convey as faithfully as possible Rousseau's repeated inquiries into possible parallels and contrasts between physical and moral or psychological "force" – as when he characterizes the contract as a pooling of forces, or when, in a famous and ambiguous phrase, he speaks of men's being "forced to be free" (*SC* I 7 [8]), or when he derives "virtue" from "force" (*Emile* V, *OC* IV, 817; *Franquières* [21]; cp. *SC* IV 4 [1]*) and defines it as "the strength [*force*] and vigor of the soul" (*First Discourse* [11]; *Hero* [33] and Editorial Note). These inquiries are best seen as so many case studies of his constant, comprehensive examination of the relations between the law(s) of nature and the natural law(s). Unfortunately it is not always possible to convey this point as clearly in the translation as Rousseau made it in the original: when, in the brief paragraph introducing the *Social Contract*, Rousseau says he had overestimated his *forces*, it seems forced to avoid "strength"; and "The most inviolable law of nature is the law *du plus fort*" has

to be "of the stronger" (*Poland* 13 [3]). *Fort* (n., adj.), "strong," clearly has the same root as *force* and *forcer*, and its occurrence therefore reinforces the associations with these words, whereas "strong" of course does not immediately evoke an association with "force." That association grows still weaker when it comes to *à force de* (see, in particular, *SC* II 9 [1]), which means "by dint of," and will evoke "force" only to the etymologically schooled reader; it cannot be rendered at all for *force de* (as in *Poland* 3 [2]), meaning "many," and suggesting that there is force in numbers. (See also the Introduction, p. xxiii above, and the Introduction to *SC* tr.)

In some cases I have tried to preserve associations with the writings of other authors. To take but one example: *inconvénient* (n., adj.) is commonly rendered "drawback" or "disadvantage." I have tried consistently to render it as "inconvenience" and "inconvenient," because that is the term Machiavelli uses quite routinely, as when he remarks that against the *inconvinienti* facing a newly established free State there is "no remedy more powerful, more valid, more secure, or more necessary than the killing of the sons of Brutus . . ." (*Discourses* I. 16, with which cp. Rousseau's *Last Reply* [54]–[56]); it is the term Grotius uses in a crucial passage in which he also notes that ". . . you can frame no Form of Government in your Mind, which will be without Inconveniences [*incommodis*] and Dangers . . ." (*Right of War and Peace* 1, 3, § viii); it is the term Hobbes uses: e.g. "The condition of man in this life shall never be without Inconveniences . . ." (*Leviathan* ch. XX, last para.; cp. ". . . the estate of Man can never be without some incommodity or other": *Leviathan* ch. XVIII, and *De cive*, ch. X, *passim*), which Sorbière, in whose translation Rousseau read Hobbes, sometimes renders *inconvénients* and sometimes *incommodités*; it is also the term Locke uses: ". . . *Civil Government* is the proper Remedy for the Inconveniences of the State of Nature, which must certainly be Great, where Men may be Judges in their own Case . . ." (*Second Treatise*, ch. II, § xiii; cp. *ib.*, ch. VII, §§ 90, 91; ch. VIII, § 101; ch. XI, §§ 127, 136), which the contemporary French translations render *inconvénients*; cp. *SC* III 15 [10]. What Rousseau calls "inconvenience(s)" in some contexts is what in other contexts he calls "evil(s)."

In a few cases I took advantage of the fact that some French words and expressions have become part of English by leaving them

untranslated: "entre nous," "corvée," "amour propre." "Amour propre," one of the key terms of Rousseau's moral psychology, is a traditional stumbling-block for translators. Hume had already complained about the difficulties of finding a suitable English equivalent for it.

> It seems, indeed, certain that the *sentiment* of conscious worth, the self-satisfaction proceeding from a review of a man's own conduct and character – it seems certain, I say, that this sentiment which, though the most common of all sentiments, has no proper name in our language . . . The term pride is commonly taken in a bad sense; but this sentiment seems indifferent . . . The French express this sentiment by the term *amour-propre*; but as they also express self-love as well as vanity by the same term, there arises a great confusion . . .
>
> *An Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix IV: "Of Some Verbal Disputes," § 3 and note.

The obvious candidates for Rousseau's *amour propre* are "vanity," "vainglory" and "pride," especially since he introduces *amour propre* as a technical term in the context of his criticism of Hobbes's understanding of "vanity" or "vainglory." Yet none of these three English terms will do, if only because he also uses *vanité*, *orgueil* and *fierté*, and he contrasts them in the *Project for a Constitution for Corsica*, *OC* III, 937f. Fortunately, "amour propre" has found its way into Webster's *Dictionary* as well as into the *OED*. I therefore felt free to let it stand as is.

Sauvage (n., adj.) is consistently rendered "savage"; it is helpful to keep in mind that in French the word also means "wild" in contrast to "cultivated" and "domesticated," as in "wild flowers" or "wildlife"; for example, *Ineq.* I [11].

Sense (v., n.), in French as in English and in so many other languages, refers to physical as well as to moral and intellectual apprehension. Hence the distinction between being "sentient" or "sensitive" (*sensible*) and being "sensible" (*sensitif*). One prominent form the mid-eighteenth-century debate about materialism took was a debate about whether matter is or could be sentient or sensitive (see Editorial Note to *Letter to Voltaire* [8]). Rousseau explores the relations between "physical" sense and "moral" sense in all of his major writings, but perhaps most searchingly in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (especially in chapters 13 and 15); and at one

time he considered writing a *morale sensitive*, an ethics based on sentience or sensibility, which he also thought of as *le matérialisme du Sage*, "the wise man's materialism" (*Conf.* IX, *OC* I, 409). His most sustained discussions of the virtues related to the senses, temperance, moderation, sobriety, are found at the end of Book IV of the *Emile* and in the second *Dialogue*, *OC* I, 804ff. William Empson has devoted four classical studies to the changing fortunes of this family of terms, in *The Structure of Complex Words*; Jane Austen explored it beautifully in *Sense and Sensibility*; and John Austin explored it ingeniously in *Sense and Sensibilia*. The secondary literature on "sensibility" is enormous. To my knowledge, the best history of the medical background remains Oswei Temkin's classical "Studien zum 'Sinn'-Begriff in der Medizin," *Kyklos* (1929), 2:21–105. I am not aware of a comparable study of the French background, but rich materials for one can be found in Jacques Roger's classical *Les Sciences de la vie dans la pensée du XVIIIè siècle* (Armand Colin, Paris, 1963). Anyone interested in studying Rousseau's usage in detail will want to consult *Le Vocabulaire du sentiment dans l'oeuvre de J.-J. Rousseau*, compiled under the direction of Michel Gilot and Jean Sgard at the Centre d'Etude des Sensibilités de l'Université de Grenoble (Editions Slatkine, Geneva and Paris, 1970), and J. J. Spink, "Rousseau et la morale du sentiment (lexicologie, idéologie)," in *Rousseau after 200 Years*, edited by R. A. Leigh (CUP, Cambridge, 1982), pp. 239–250. Questions surrounding "sense" are further complicated by questions about *sentiment* or "sentiment." Rousseau reserves the term for the inmost stratum of our being and experience, what he came to call "the sentiment of one's own existence" (references in the Editorial Notes to *Second Discourse* I [21]). More generally, both "sense" and "sentiment" come to be seen as less rigorous but deeper, more rooted than reason or "mere ratiocination," and both French and English come increasingly to use "sentiment" in place of opinion, or judgment, or even thought – as Hume does in the passage about *amour propre* quoted above. Rousseau himself remains ever mindful of the difference between sentiment and thought, and he draws a sharp distinction between "proof by sentiment" and rational proof, a distinction which very strictly corresponds to the important distinction he frequently draws between persuasion and conviction (e.g. *Voltaire* [30]; *Franquières* [11], *To Mirabeau* [14]). For these reasons

among others, it is preferable, whenever possible, to render *sentir* with "to sense" or "to be sensible to," rather than with the more usual "to feel." *Sentimental* ("sentimental") enters the language in the mid-eighteenth century, but plays no role in Rousseau's vocabulary; how much it, too, becomes saturated with the ambiguities of its root term is nicely conveyed by Flaubert's title *Education sentimentale*, "Sentimental Education."

Whenever Rousseau qualifies something as *véritable*, "genuine," he is explicitly or implicitly contrasting it with what he regards as a spurious alternative; *vrai*, "true" does not imply such a contrast.

Although he is remarkably consistent in the use of his technical vocabulary, Rousseau expressly calls attention to the fact that he finds it impossible to be invariably so (*Emile* II, *OC* IV, 345*); and that it sometimes suits his purposes not to be so (*SC* I 6 [10] near the end), in other words that it sometimes suits his purposes to be deliberately ambiguous in the use of his political language. Thus, for example, he will occasionally use the language of natural law, although he rejects the idea or concept of natural law. At times it suits him to use "government" to refer to what most of us would most of the time call either "government" or "the state" – as he does in the title of his work on *Poland* – although for precise, technical purposes, he restricts "government" to strictly subordinate administrative and executive functions (he reviews the various senses of "government" in *Lettres de la montagne* V, *OC* III, 770f. and *ib.*, VI, *OC* III, 808f.; also see *Emile* V, *OC* IV, 844–848, tr. Bloom 463–466). "Government," as he defines it, is not sovereign (*SC* III I [3]–[5]). The people is. In Rousseau's technical vocabulary, *peuple* or "people" corresponds to what we would now refer to either as "a people" or a "nation": as, for example, in "the French people or nation" (*SC* I 6 [10]); ". . . the act by which a people is a people . . . is the true foundation of society" (*SC* I 5 [2]). Like "nation," "people" can be used both in the singular – e.g. "the people is sovereign"; "it can be misled" – and in the plural – e.g. "there are no more peoples being formed" (*SC* IV 4 [1]). Rousseau also uses "people" to refer to the many, those who labor and are poor – e.g. "It is the people that makes up mankind; what is not people is so slight a thing as not to be worth taking into account" (*Emile* IV, *OC* IV, 509, tr. Bloom 225) – and whenever he uses "people" in his more technical sense, he wants his reader to have the association

with *peuple* in this more common sense of the term. Rousseau's use of *peuple(s)* significantly influenced later uses – and conceptions – of "folk," especially in the German sense of *Volk*.

Police most of the time means "administration" (*SC* III 15 [12], IV 1 [3]; *Poland* 7 [24]). *Policé* literally means "politicized" in contrast to being in the state preceding political society; the Latinized version of the word, "civilized," fails to do justice to the French word because it no longer has a primarily political connotation; also, Rousseau sometimes uses "civilize," and when he does, he uses it as we would use it now. Where possible I have therefore translated it "politically organized." I am not aware of a single occurrence of *civilization* in Rousseau; its first recorded use in French (in 1757) is by Rousseau's correspondent, Mirabeau ("Civilization: Contribution à l'histoire du mot," E. Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale* [Gallimard, Paris, 1966], pp. 336–345). *Politesse* is "politeness" in the sense of "urbanity," and in contrast to "rusticity" or even "boorishness" (see especially *First Discourse* [10], [14]); whereas "civility" consists in acting in conformity with natural right toward fellow-citizens, in contrast to "humanity," which consists in acting in conformity with it toward strangers. The contrast literally corresponds to the contrast citizen/man and to the corresponding contrast political right/natural right: Introduction to *SC* tr., pp. x–xxx. *Politique(s)* (n.) is now commonly translated "political theorist(s)," which suggests departments of political science, and has little to do with Rousseau's meaning. The true *politique*, he tells the Archbishop of Paris, seeks to render peoples happy and good by striving for the harmony between the private and the public good (*To Beaumont*, *OC* IV, 937). Bacon sometimes simply kept the French term – ". . . it is as hard and severe a thing to be a true politique, as to be truly moral" (*Advancement of Learning* II) – and sometimes used "politic men." I have somewhat reluctantly translated "politician(s)." The *politiques* were also the party of those who, like Bodin, sought political solutions to religious conflicts, and the term long had the same associations in its English use.

Such examples could be multiplied almost at will. An adequate discussion of any one of the more important terms in Rousseau's vocabulary would require a full essay. Every now and then I have flagged some of these terms in the Editorial Notes. In the Introduction to this collection of Rousseau's political writings, *SC* tr., I have

sketched the broad outlines of what a fuller survey of his use of the key term "right" might look like.

While Rousseau is not perfectly consistent in his use of capitalization, certain words clearly mean one thing when he capitalizes them, and another when he does not. A few examples will, again, have to suffice. For the most part he uses *Cité*, "City," as a technical term roughly equivalent to the Latin *civitas*; it is, of course, the root of "Citizen," a term to which he did so much to restore its distinctive resonance. By contrast, *ville*, "city," means just what we mean when we speak about a city or a town; occasionally it is spelled *Ville*, and "City" then does not mean anything like *civitas*, but simply refers to a specific city, e.g. Lisbon. These differences should always be clear enough from the context.

Etat, "state," refers to (1) any more or less stable, lasting condition, as in "the state of her health" or in "state of affairs" and, of course, in "state of nature" or "civil state"; this is the meaning of "state" that informs Hume's criticism of Hobbes's state of nature: "Whether such a condition of human nature could ever exist, or if it did, could continue so long as to merit the appellation of a *state*, may justly be doubted" (*Concerning the Principles of Morals* 1, 3). (2) It refers to "estate" (German: *Stand*) as in "the third estate," as well as "rank" or "station" as in "my station and its duties." However, (3) *état* in this sense must sometimes be translated by "position," as in "being in a position to . . ." (4) Finally, Rousseau writes *état* in referring to any particular given political state, e.g. "the French state," whereas in reference to the political state in general he writes "State" (*Etat*): The ". . . public person . . . formed by the union of all the others, formerly assumed the name *City*, and now assumes that of *Republic* or of *body politic*, which is called by its members *State* when it is passive, *Sovereign* when active . . ." (*SC*, 1 7 [10]).

Gouvernement, "Government," is the institution of government; *gouvernement*, "government," refers to any given government, the government of this State or that, or of this or that province, municipality or other sub-division of the State.

The modern reader cannot help being struck by the fact that Rousseau does not capitalize certain words which contemporary

writers would regard it as irreverent or inconsiderate not to capitalize.

Punctuation is almost as much a problem in rendering a text from one language into another as is vocabulary. Decisions about punctuation are decisions about respecting the meaning, but also the rhythm and flow of the text, and hence of the thought. Rarely is anything gained by breaking up a competent writer's sentences, and almost always something is lost in the process.

A note on the editorial notes and the index

The Editorial Notes have been relegated to the end in order to keep them from intruding between text and reader. They identify persons, events, texts or passages, and sometimes doctrines which Rousseau mentions or alludes to. Very occasionally they call attention to parallels with what he says in other writings. They remain at or near the surface of the texts. They do not analyze or interpret.

The Index is designed to be of help even to close readers of these texts.

DISCOURS
QUI A REMPORTE' LE PRIX
A L'ACADEMIE
DE DIJON.

En l'année 1750.

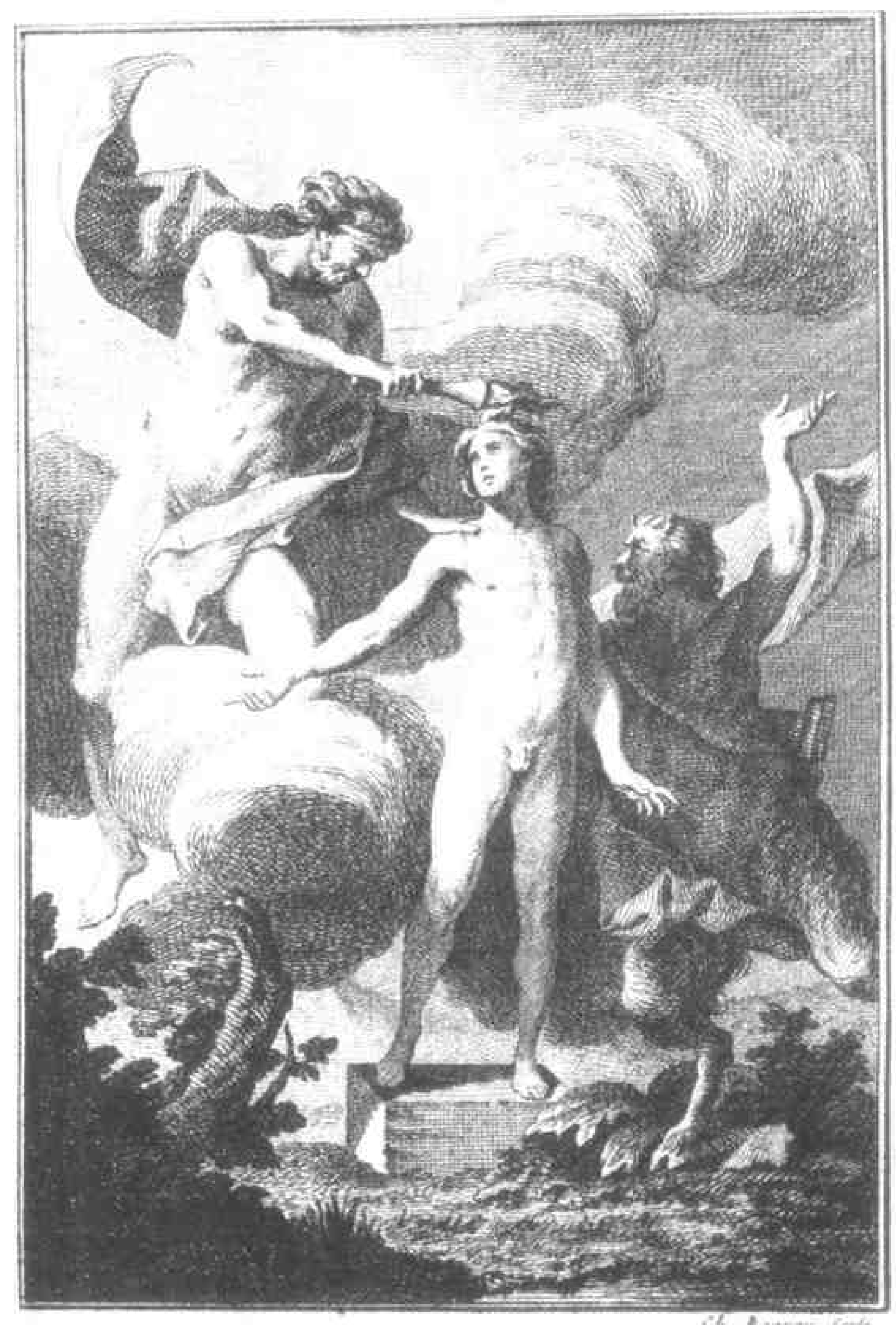
Sur cette Question proposée par la même Académie :
Si le rétablissement des Sciences & des Arts a contribué à épurer les mœurs.

PAR UN CITOYEN DE GENEVE.

Barbarus hic ego sum quia non intelligor illis. Ovid.



A GENEVE,
Chez BARILLOT & fils.



Ch. Baquoy Sculp.

Satyre, tu ne le connois pas.

Satyr, you do not ***know*** *it*; see note p. 16.

Discourse

which won the prize

OF THE ACADEMY

OF DIJON

In the year 1750

On this Question proposed by the Academy:

Whether the restoration of the Sciences and Arts has contributed to the purification of morals

By a Citizen of Geneva

Here I am the barbarian because
they do not understand me. Ovid

Geneva
Barillot & Son

[*OC* III *3*]

PREFACE

[1] *Here is one of the grand and of the finest questions ever raised. This Discourse is not concerned with those metaphysical subtleties that have spread to all departments of Literature, and of which the Programs of Academies are not always free; it is concerned, rather, with one of those truths that affect the happiness of mankind.*

[2] *I expect I shall not easily be forgiven for taking the side I have dared to take. Clashing head on with all that is today admired by men, I can only expect universal blame: and it is not for having been honored by the approbation of a few Wise men, that I should expect the approbation of the Public: Thus I have chosen my side; I do not care whether I please Wits or the Fashionable. There will always be men destined to be subjugated by the opinions of their century, their Country, their Society: Some men today act the part of the Freethinker and the Philosopher who, for the same reason, would have been but fanatics at the time of the League. One ought not to write for such Readers when one wants to live beyond one's century.*

[3] *One word more, and I have done. Little expecting the honor bestowed on me, I had, after sending off this Discourse, recast and expanded it to the point of making it, as it were, into another Work; I believed myself obliged to restore it today to the state in which it was awarded the prize. I have only thrown in some notes and let stand two easily recognized additions of which the Academy might perhaps not have approved. I thought that equity, respect, and gratitude required this notice of me.*

[5]

Discourse

We are deceived by the appearance of right.

[4] Has the restoration of the Sciences and Arts contributed to the purification of Morals, or to their corruption? This is what has to be examined. Which side ought I to take in this question? The side, Gentlemen, which becomes an honest man who knows nothing and esteems himself none the less for it.

[5] I am sensible to the difficulty of making what I have to say conform to the Tribunal before which I appear. How shall I dare to blame the Sciences before one of the most learned Associations of Europe, praise ignorance in a celebrated Academy, and reconcile contempt for study with respect for the truly Learned? I have seen these contradictions; and they have not deterred me. It is not, so I have told myself, Science I abuse; it is Virtue I defend before virtuous men. Probity is even dearer to Good Men than erudition is to the Learned. What, then, have I to fear? The enlightenment of the Assembly listening to me? I acknowledge it; but only with regard to the composition of the discourse, not to the Speaker's sentiment. Equitable Sovereigns have never hesitated to pass judgment against themselves in debates of doubtful issue; and the most advantageous position in a just cause is to have to defend oneself against a Party of integrity and enlightenment judging in his own case.

[6] To this motive which emboldens me is joined another which decides me: namely that, upon upholding the side of truth according to my natural light; regardless of how successful I may be, there is one Prize that cannot escape me: I shall find it in the depths of my heart.

[6]

Part I

[7] It is a grand and a fine spectacle to see man go forth as it were out of nothing by his own efforts; to dispel by the lights of his reason the darkness in which nature had enveloped him; to raise himself above himself; to soar by the mind to the celestial realms; to traverse the vast expanse of the Universe with Giant strides, like to the Sun; and, what is grander and more difficult still, to return into himself, there to study man and to know his nature, his duties, and his end. All these wonders have occurred anew in the past few Generations.

[8] Europe had relapsed into the Barbarism of the first ages. A few centuries ago the Peoples of this Part of the World, which is today so enlightened, lived in a state worse than ignorance. I know not what scientific jargon more contemptible still than ignorance had usurped the name of knowledge, and stood as an almost insurmountable obstacle in the path of its return. A revolution was required to return men to common sense; it finally came from the quarter from which it was least to be expected. The stupid Muslim, the eternal scourge of Letters, caused them to be reborn among us. The fall of the Throne of Constantine carried the wreckage of ancient Greece into Italy. France, in turn, was enriched by these precious spoils. Soon the sciences followed Letters; the Art of writing was joined by the Art of thinking; a sequence which appears strange but is perhaps only too natural; and the major advantage of commerce with the muses began to be felt, namely of rendering men more sociable by inspiring in them the desire to please one another with works worthy of their mutual approbation.

[9] The mind has its needs, as has the body. The latter make up the foundations of society, the former make for its being agreeable. While the Government and the Laws see to the [7] safety and the well-being of men assembled, the Sciences, Letters, and Arts, less despotic and perhaps more powerful, spread garlands of flowers over the iron chains with which they are laden, throttle in them the sentiment of that original freedom for which they seemed born, make them love their slavery, and fashion them into what is called civilized Peoples. Need raised up Thrones; the Sciences and Arts have made them strong. Earthly Powers, love talents and protect

those who cultivate them!* Civilized peoples, cultivate them: Happy slaves, you owe them the delicate and refined taste on which you pride yourselves; the sweet character and urbane morals which make for such engaging and easy relations among you; in a word, the appearances of all the virtues without having a single one.

[10] This is the kind of politeness, the more endearing as it affects to show itself less, that formerly distinguished Athens and Rome in the so much vaunted days of their magnificence and splendor: by it, no doubt, our century and our Nation shall surpass all times and all Peoples. A philosophic tone devoid of pedantry, manners natural yet engaging, as far removed from Teutonic rusticity as from Italian Pantomime: Such are the fruits of taste acquired by good education and perfected in dealings with the World.

[11] How sweet it would be to live among us if the outward countenance were always the image of the heart's dispositions; if decency were virtue; if our maxims were our rules; if genuine Philosophy were inseparable from the title of Philosopher! But so many qualities [*8*] all too seldom go together, and virtue hardly goes forth with so much pomp. Rich apparel may herald a man of great wealth, and its elegance a man of taste; the healthy and robust man is recognized by other signs: strength and vigor of body will be found under the rustic habit of a Husbandman, and not under the gilding of a Courtier. Apparel is no less alien to virtue, which is the strength and vigor of the soul. The good man is an Athlete who delights in fighting naked: He despises all those vile ornaments which would hinder his use of his strength, and most of which were invented only to conceal some deformity.

[12] Before Art had fashioned our manners and taught our passions to speak in ready-made terms, our morals were rustic but natural; and differences in conduct conveyed differences of character at first glance. Human nature was, at bottom, no better; but

* Princes always view with pleasure the dissemination among their subjects of a taste for the agreeable Arts and for superfluities which entail no export of monies. For besides thus nurturing in them that pettiness of soul so suited to servitude, they well know that all the needs which a People imposes on itself are so many chains which it assumes. Alexander, wishing to keep the Ichthyophagi dependent on him, compelled them to give up fishing and to eat the foods common to other Peoples; and the Savages of America who go about altogether naked and live entirely off the products of their hunt have proved impossible to tame. Indeed, what yoke could be imposed upon men who need nothing?

men found their security in how easily they saw through one another, and this advantage, to the value of which we are no longer sensible, spared them a good many vices.

[13] Today, when subtler inquiries and a more refined taste have reduced the Art of pleasing to principles, a vile and deceiving uniformity prevails in our morals, and all minds seem to have been cast in the same mold: constantly politeness demands, propriety commands: constantly one follows custom, never one's own genius. One no longer dares to appear what one is; and under this perpetual constraint, the men who make up the herd that is called society will, when placed in similar circumstances, all act in similar ways unless more powerful motives incline them differently. One will thus never really know with whom one is dealing: in order to know one's friend one will therefore have to wait for great occasions, that is, to wait until it is too late, since it is for these very occasions that it would have been essential to know him.

[14] What a train of vices must attend upon such uncertainty. No more sincere friendships; no more real esteem; no more well-founded trust. Suspicions, offenses, fears, coolness, reserve, hatred, betrayal, will constantly hide beneath this even and deceitful veil of politeness, beneath this so much vaunted urbanity which we [9] owe to the enlightenment of our century. One will no longer profane the name of the Lord of the Universe with oaths, but insult it with blasphemies that pass our scrupulous ears without offending them. One will not vaunt one's own merit, but disparage that of others. One will not crudely offend one's enemy, but malign him artfully. National hatreds will die out, but so will the love of Fatherland. Scorned ignorance will be replaced by a dangerous Pyrrhonism. Some excesses will be proscribed, some vices held in dishonor, but others will be emblazoned with the name of virtues; one will either have to have them or to affect them. Let those who wish to do so, extol the sobriety of the Wise men of the age, but for myself, I see in it but a refinement of intemperance as unworthy of my praise as is their artful simplicity.*

[15] Such is the purity our morals have acquired, this is how we have become good Men. Let Letters, the Sciences, and the Arts

* *I like*, says Montaigne, *to argue and discuss, but only with but a few men and for my own sake. For I find it to be a most unbecoming profession for a man of honor to*

each claim their share in such a salutary achievement. I shall add but one reflection; that if an Inhabitant of some distant lands seeking to form an idea of European morals from the state of the Sciences among us, the perfection of our Arts, the propriety of our Theater, the politeness of our manners, the affability of our discourse, our incessant professions of goodwill, and from this bustling race of men of all ages and conditions who, from early Dawn until the setting of the Sun, seem at pains to oblige one another; this Stranger, I say, would guess our morals to be precisely the opposite of what they are.

[16] Where there is no effect, no cause need be sought: but here the effect is certain, the depravation real, and our souls have become corrupted in proportion as our Sciences and our Arts have advanced toward perfection. Shall it be said that this is a misfortune peculiar to our age? No, Gentlemen, the ills caused by our vain curiosity are as old [*10*] as the world. The daily rise and fall of the Ocean's waters have not been more strictly subjected to the course of the Star that illumines us by night, than has the fate of morals and probity to the progress of the Sciences and Arts. Virtue has been seen fleeing in proportion as their light rose on our horizon, and the same phenomenon has been observed at all times and in all places.

[17] Consider Egypt, that first school of the Universe, that fertile climate beneath a brazen sky, that famous land from which Sesostris long ago set out to conquer the World. She became the mother of Philosophy and the fine Arts, and soon thereafter was conquered by Cambyses, then by the Greeks, by the Romans, the Arabs, and finally the Turks.

[18] Consider Greece, formerly peopled by Heroes who twice vanquished Asia, once before Troy, and once in their own homes. Nascent Letters had not yet carried corruption into the hearts of its Inhabitants; but the progress of the Arts, the disintegration of morals, and the Macedonian's yoke closely followed one another; and Greece, ever learned, ever voluptuous, and ever enslaved, thereafter experienced nothing but a change of masters in the course of its revolutions. All of Demosthenes's eloquence never succeeded in revivifying a body which luxury and the Arts had enervated.

serve as a Spectacle to the Great and wantonly to display one's mind and one's prattling. It is the profession of all our wits save one.

[19] It is at the time of the likes of Ennius and of Terence that Rome, founded by a Shepherd and rendered illustrious by Tillers of the soil, begins to degenerate. But after the likes of Ovid, of Catullus, of Martial, and that host of obscene Writers whose very names offend modesty, Rome, formerly the Temple of Virtue, becomes the Theater of crime, the scandal of Nations, and the sport of barbarians. This Capital of the World finally succumbs to the yoke it had imposed on so many Peoples, and the day of its fall was the eve of the day on which one of its Citizens was given the title of Arbiter of good taste.

[20] What shall I say of the Capital of the Eastern Empire which, by its location, seemed destined to be that of the entire World, that refuge of the Sciences and the Arts banned from the rest of Europe perhaps more out of wisdom than of barbarism. All that is most shameful in debauchery and corruption; blackest in betrayals, assassinations and poisons; most atrocious in the combination of crimes of every kind; [*11*] this is what makes up the fabric of the History of Constantinople; this is the pure source from which the Enlightenment in which our century glories has come to us.

[21] But why seek in remote times proofs of a truth for which we have abiding testimony before our own eyes. There is in Asia an immense land where Letters are honored and lead to the foremost dignities of State. If the Sciences purified morals, if they taught men to shed their blood for the Fatherland, if they animated courage; the Peoples of China should be wise, free, and invincible. But if there is not a single vice that does not rule them, not a single crime that is unfamiliar to them; if neither the enlightenment of the Ministers, nor the presumed wisdom of the Laws, nor the large number of Inhabitants of that vast Empire have been able to protect it from the yoke of the ignorant and coarse Tartar, of what use have all its Scholars been? What benefit has China derived from all the honors bestowed upon them? Is it to be peopled by slaves and evil-doers?

[22] Let us contrast these scenes with that of the morals of the small number of Peoples who, protected against this contamination of vain knowledge, have by their virtues wrought their own happiness and the model for all other Nations. Such were the first Persians, a singular Nation where virtue was learned as Science is learned among us; which subjugated Asia with such ease, and is the only

Nation to enjoy the glory of having the history of its institutions mistaken for a Philosophical Romance: Such were the Scythians of whom such magnificent praise has come down to us: Such were the Germans, whose simplicity, innocence and virtues a pen weary of tracing the crimes and blackness of an educated, opulent, and voluptuous People took relief in depicting. Such had been Rome itself in the times of its poverty and ignorance. Such, finally, has shown itself to be down to our own day that rustic nation so vaunted for its courage which adversity could not subdue, and for its faithfulness which example could not corrupt.* [*12*]

[23] It was not owing to stupidity that they preferred other forms of exercise to those of the mind. They were not ignorant of the fact that in other lands idle men spent their lives arguing about the sovereign good, vice and virtue, or that prideful ratiocinators heaped the greatest praise upon themselves while lumping together all other Peoples under the contemptuous name of barbarians; but they considered their morals and learned to disdain their teaching.*

[24] Can I forget that it was in the very lap of Greece that was seen to arise the City equally famed for its happy ignorance and for the wisdom of its Laws, that Republic of demi-Gods rather than of men, so much superior to humanity did their virtues appear? O Sparta! eternal shame to a vain teaching! While the vices, led by the fine Arts, together insinuated themselves into Athens, while a Tyrant was there so carefully assembling the works of the Prince of Poets, you expelled the Arts and Artists, the Sciences and Scientists from your walls.

[25] The event confirmed this difference. Athens became the home of sophistication and of taste, the country of Orators and

* I dare not speak of those happy Nations which do not know even by name the vices we have so much difficulty in repressing, those savages of America whose simple and natural polity Montaigne unhesitatingly prefers not only to Plato's *Laws*, [*12*] but even to everything that Philosophy could ever imagine as most perfect for the government of Peoples. He cites numerous examples striking to those able to admire them: "But then," says he, "they wear no breeches!"

* I should honestly like to be told what must have been the Athenians' own opinion about eloquence, when they so carefully excluded it from that upright Tribunal from whose Judgments the Gods themselves did not appeal? What did the Romans think of medicine when they banished it from their Republic? And when a residue of humanity led the Spaniards to forbid their Lawyers entry into America, what must have been their idea of Jurisprudence? Would it not seem that they believed that with this one Edict they could make up for all the evils they had inflicted on those wretched Indians?

Philosophers. The elegance of its Buildings matched that of the language. Marble and canvas enlivened by the hands of the most skillful Masters were everywhere to be seen. From Athens issued those astounding works that will stand as models in every corrupt age. The Picture of Lacedaemon is less brilliant. *There*, the other Peoples used to say, [*13*] *men are born virtuous, and the very air of the Country seems to inspire virtue.* All that is left us of its Inhabitants is the memory of their heroic deeds. Are such monuments worth less to us than the quaint marbles left us by Athens?

[26] Some few wise men did, it is true, withstand the general tide, and guard against vice in the midst of the Muses. But listen to the indictment of the Learned and the Artists of his time by the foremost and the most wretched of them.

[27] "I have," he says, "examined the Poets, and I consider them to be people whose talent impresses themselves and others, who claim to be wise men, who are taken to be such, and who are anything but that."

[28] "From the Poets," Socrates continues, "I went on to the Artists. No one was more ignorant of the Arts than I; no one was more convinced that the Artists possessed some very fine secrets. Yet I perceived that their condition is no better than the Poets', and that they both labor under the same prejudice. Because the most skilled among them excel in their particular Field, they look upon themselves as the wisest of men. In my eyes this presumption has completely tarnished their knowledge: So that, putting myself in the place of the Oracle, and asking myself what I would prefer to be, what I am or what they are, to know what they have learned or to know that I know nothing; I answered myself and the God: I want to remain what I am.

[29] "We do not know, neither the Sophists nor the Poets, nor the Orators, nor the Artists, nor I, what is the true, the good, and the beautiful: But there is this difference between us that, although these people know nothing, they all believe they know something: Whereas I, while I know nothing, am at least not in any doubt about it. So that the whole superiority in wisdom which the Oracle attributes to me, reduces to nothing more than that I am fully convinced that I am ignorant of what I do not know."

[30] Here, then, is the Wisest of men in the Judgment of the Gods, and the most learned of Athenians according to the sense of

all Greece, Socrates, speaking in Praise of ignorance! Does anyone believe that, if he were to be reborn among us, our [*14*] Learned and our Artists would cause him to change his mind? No, Gentlemen, this just man would continue to despise our vain Sciences; he would not help swell the mass of books that flood in on us from all sides, and the only precept which he would leave is the precept which he did leave to his disciples and to our Descendants, the example and the memory of his virtue. It is fine thus to teach men!

[31] Socrates had begun in Athens, the elder Cato continued in Rome to inveigh against those artful and subtle Greeks who seduced virtue and enervated the courage of his fellow-citizens. But the Sciences, the Arts, and dialectics once again prevailed; Rome filled up with Philosophers and Orators; military discipline came to be neglected, agriculture despised; Sects joined, and the Fatherland forgotten. The sacred names of liberty, disinterestedness, obedience to the Laws, were replaced by the names of Epicurus, Zeno, Arcesilaus. *Ever since the Learned have begun to appear among us*, so their own Philosophers themselves said, *good Men have been in eclipse.* Until then the Romans had been content to practice virtue; all was lost when they began to study it.

[32] O Fabricius! what would your great soul have thought if, unhappily recalled to life, you had seen the pompous countenance of that Rome which your arm rescued and your good name adorned more than did all of her conquests? "Gods!" you would have said, "what has become of the thatch roofs and the rustic hearths where moderation and virtue used to dwell? What fatal splendor has replaced Roman simplicity? What is this alien speech? What are these effeminate morals? What is the meaning of these statues, these Paintings, these buildings? Fools, what have you done? You, the Masters of Nations, made yourselves the slaves of the frivolous men you vanquished? Do Rhetoricians govern you? Was it in order to enrich Architects, Painters, Sculptors, and Thespians that you spilled your blood in Greece and in Asia? Have the spoils of Carthage become the prey of a flute-player? Romans, hasten to overturn these Amphitheaters; smash these marbles; burn these paintings; drive out these slaves who [*15*] subjugate you and whose fatal arts corrupt you. Let other hands acquire fame for vain talents; the only talent worthy of Rome is that of conquering the world and making virtue reign in it. When Cineas took our Senate for an Assembly

of Kings he was not dazzled by vain pomp or studied elegance He did not, in that Senate, hear the frivolous eloquence that is the object of study and delight of futile men. What, then, did Cineas see that was so majestic? O Citizens! He saw a spectacle which neither your riches nor all your arts shall ever succeed in exhibiting; the finest spectacle ever to appear under heaven, the Assembly of two hundred virtuous men, worthy of commanding in Rome and of governing the earth."

[33] But let us cross the distance of place and time, and see what has occurred in our lands and before our own eyes; or rather, let us set aside repugnant depictions that would offend our delicacy, and spare ourselves the trouble of repeating the same thing with different names. My invoking Fabricius's shade was not haphazard; and what did I have this great man say that I could not have put into the mouth of Louis XII or of Henry IV? Among us, it is true, Socrates would not have drunk the hemlock; but he would have drunk from a cup more bitter still, insulting jeers, and the scorn that is a hundred times worse than death.

[34] This is how luxury, dissoluteness and slavery have at all times been the punishment visited upon our prideful efforts to leave the happy ignorance in which eternal wisdom had placed us. The heavy veil it has drawn over all of its operations seemed sufficiently to warn us that it had not destined us for vain inquiries. But is there even one of its lessons from which we have known how to profit, or which we have neglected with impunity? Peoples, know, then, once and for all, that nature wanted to preserve you from science as a mother snatches a dangerous weapon from the hands of her child; that all the secrets she hides from you are so many evils from which she protects you, and that the difficulty you have in learning is not the least of her favors. Men are perverse; they would be worse still if they had had the misfortune of being born learned.

[35] How humiliating to humanity such reflections are! [*16*] How greatly mortified our pride must be by them! What! probity the daughter of ignorance? Science and virtue incompatible? What conclusions might not be drawn from such prejudices? But in order to resolve these apparent contradictions one need only examine closely the vanity and vacuousness of those proud titles which dazzle us and which we so gratuitously bestow on human knowledge. Let us,

therefore, consider the Sciences and the Arts in themselves. Let us see what must result from their progress; and let us no longer hesitate to grant all the points where our reasoning shall be found to agree with the historical inferences.

PART II

[36] According to an ancient tradition passed on from Egypt to Greece, a God inimical to men's repose was the inventor of the sciences.* What, then, must the Egyptians themselves, among whom the sciences were born, have thought of them! It is that they saw near at hand the sources that had brought them forth. Indeed, regardless of whether one consults the annals of the world, or supplements uncertain chronicles with philosophical inquiries, one will not find that human knowledge has an origin that corresponds to the idea one likes to conceive regarding it. Astronomy was born of superstition; Eloquence of ambition, hatred, flattery, lying; Geometry of greed; Physics of a vain curiosity; all of them, even Ethics, of human pride. The Sciences and the Arts thus owe their birth to our vices; we should be less in doubt regarding their advantages if they owed it to our virtues.

[37] Their flawed origin is all too clearly mirrored for us in their objects. What would we do with the Arts, without luxury to sustain them? Without men's injustices, what would be the use of Jurisprudence? What would become of History if there were neither Tyrants, nor Wars, nor Conspirators? In short, who would want to spend his life in barren thoughts if everyone consulted only man's duties and nature's needs, and had time only for the Fatherland, for the unfortunate, and for his [*18*] friends? Are we, then, destined to die tied to the edge of the well into which truth has withdrawn? This reflection alone should from the very outset deter anyone seriously trying to educate himself by studying Philosophy.

[38] How many dangers! How many wrong roads in the investigation of the Sciences? Through how many errors, a thousand times more dangerous than the truth is useful, must one not make one's way in order to reach it? The drawback is manifest; for falsehood admits of an infinite number of combinations; but truth has only

* It is easy to see the allegory of the Prometheus fable, and it does not appear that the Greeks who nailed him to Mount Caucasus thought any more favorably of him than did the Egyptians of their God Theuth. "The satyr," says an ancient fable, "wanted to kiss and embrace fire the first time he saw it but Prometheus cried out to him: 'Satyr, you will weep the loss of the beard on your chin, for it burns when you touch it.'" This is the subject of the frontispiece.

one way of being. Besides, who seeks it altogether sincerely? But even with the best will, by what indices is one sure to recognize it? Amid this host of different sentiments, what shall be our criterion for it?* And, most difficult of all, if we should have the good fortune of finally finding it, who of us will know how to use it well?

[39] While our sciences are vain with respect to the objects they pursue, they are even more dangerous in the effects they produce. Born in idleness, they feed it in turn; and the irreparable loss of time is the first injury they necessarily inflict on society. In politics, as in ethics, not to do good is a great evil, and every useless citizen may be looked upon as a pernicious man. Answer me then, illustrious Philosophers, you to whom we owe it to know in what ratios bodies attract one another in a vacuum; the proportions between areas swept in equal times by the revolutions of the planets; which curves have conjugate points, which have inflection points, and which cusps; how man sees everything in God; how there is correspondence without communication between soul and body, as there would be between two clocks; what stars may be inhabited; what insects reproduce in an uncommon way. [*19*] Answer me, I say, you from whom we have received so much sublime knowledge; if you had never taught us any of these things, would we have been any the less numerous for it, any the less well governed, the less formidable, the less flourishing or the more perverse? Reconsider the importance of your achievements, then; and if the labors of our most enlightened learned men and our best Citizens provide us with so little that is useful, tell us what we are to think of that host of obscure Writers and idle Literati who devour the State's substance at a pure loss.

[40] What am I saying; idle? would to God they indeed were! Morals would be the healthier and society more peaceful. But these vain and futile declaimers go off in all directions, armed with their deadly paradoxes; undermining the foundations of faith, and annihilating virtue. They smile disdainfully at such old-fashioned words as Fatherland and Religion, and dedicate their talents and their

* The less one knows, the more one believes oneself to know. Did the Peripatetics doubt anything? Did not Descartes construct the Universe with cubes and vortices? Is there even nowadays in Europe a Physicist, however paltry, who would not make bold to explain the profound mystery of electricity, which will perhaps forever remain the despair of true Philosophers?

Philosophy to destroying and degrading all that is sacred among men. Not that at bottom they hate either virtue or our dogmas; their enemy is public opinion; and in order to return them to the feet of the altars, one need only banish them among the Atheists. O rage for distinction, what will you not do?

[41] The abuse of time is a great evil. Other, even worse evils follow in the wake of the Letters and Arts. One of these is luxury, born, like they, of men's idleness and vanity. Luxury is seldom found without the sciences and the arts, and they are never found without it. I know that our Philosophy, ever fertile in singular maxims, contends, in the face of the experience of all centuries, that luxury makes for the splendor of States; but having forgotten the necessity of sumptuary laws, will it also dare deny that good morals are essential if Empires are to endure, and that luxury is diametrically opposed to good morals? Granting that luxury is a certain sign of riches; that, if you like, it even serves to increase them: What conclusion is to be drawn from this paradox so worthy of being born in our time; and what will become of virtue, when one has to get rich at all cost? The ancient politicians forever spoke of morals and of virtue; ours speak only of commerce and of money. One will tell you that in a given [20] land a man is worth the sum for which he would be sold in Algiers; another, pursuing this calculation, will find countries where a man is worth nothing, and others where he is worth less than nothing. They appraise men like herds of cattle. According to them a man is worth to the State only what he consumes in it. By that token one Sybarite would easily have been worth thirty Lacedaemonians. Try to guess, then, which of the two Republics, Sparta or Sybaris, was subdued by a handful of peasants, and which caused Asia to tremble.

[42] The Monarchy of Cyrus was conquered with thirty thousand men by a Prince poorer than the least Persian Satrap; and the Scythians, the most miserable of all Peoples, resisted the most powerful Monarchs of the Universe. Two famed Republics contended for the Empire of the World; one was very rich, and the other had nothing, and it was the latter which destroyed the first. The Roman Empire, having swallowed all the riches of the Universe, in its turn fell prey to men who did not so much as know what riches were. The Franks conquered the Gauls, and the Saxons conquered England with no other treasures than their bravery and their poverty.

A band of poor Mountaineers whose entire greed was confined to a few sheepskins, having tamed Austrian pride, went on to crush the opulent and formidable House of Burgundy before which the Potentates of Europe trembled. Finally, all the power and wisdom of Charles the Fifth's heir, backed by all the treasures of the Indies, were beaten by a handful of herring fishers. Let our politicians deign to suspend their calculations in order to reflect on these examples, and learn once and for all that with money one has everything, except morals and Citizens.

[43] What, then, precisely is at issue in this question of luxury? To know what matters most to Empires, to be brilliant and short-lived, or virtuous and long-lasting. I say brilliant, but by what luster? A taste for ostentation is scarcely ever combined in one soul with a taste for the honest. No, Minds debased by a host of futile cares cannot possibly ever rise to anything great; and even if they had the requisite strength, they would lack the courage. [*21*]

[44] Every Artist wants to be applauded. His contemporaries' praise is the most precious portion of his reward. What, then, will he do to obtain it, if he has the misfortune to be born among a People and at a time when the Learned, having become fashionable, have placed frivolous youths in the position of setting the tone; when men have sacrificed their taste to the Tyrants of their freedom;* when masterpieces of dramatic Poetry are dropped [from repertories], and marvels of harmony rejected because one of the sexes dares to approve only of what suits the other's pusillanimity? What will he do, Gentlemen? He will lower his genius to the level of his century, and compose popular works that are admired during his lifetime, rather than marvels that would be admired only long after his death. Tell us, famed Arouet, how many manly and strong beauties you have sacrificed to our false delicacy, and how many

* I am far from thinking that this ascendancy of women is in itself an evil. It is a gift bestowed upon them by nature for the happiness of Mankind: better directed, it might produce as much good as it nowadays does harm. We are not sufficiently sensible to the benefits that would accrue to society if the half of Mankind which governs the other were given a better education. Men will always be what it pleases women that they be: so that if you want them to become great and virtuous, teach women what greatness of soul and virtue is. The reflections to which this subject lends itself, and which Plato made in former times, amply deserve to be more fully detailed by a pen worthy of modeling itself on such a master and of defending so grand a cause.

great things the spirit of gallantry that is so prolific in small things has cost you?

[45] This is how the dissolution of morals, the necessary consequence of luxury, in turn leads to the corruption of taste. If, by chance, someone among the men of extraordinary talents were steadfast of soul and refused to yield to the genius of his century and to debase himself by puerile productions, woe betide him! He will die in poverty and oblivion. Would that I were making a prediction and not reporting an experience! Carle, Pierre; the time has come when the brush intended to enhance the majesty of our Temples with sublime and holy images will either fall from your hands, or be prostituted to decorate the panels of a carriage with lascivious pictures. And you, the rival [22] of the likes of Praxiteles and of Phidias; you whose chisel the ancients would have employed to make them such Gods as would have excused their idolatry in our eyes; inimitable Pigal, either your hand will consent to burnish the belly of some grotesque figurine, or it will have to remain idle.

[46] One cannot reflect on morals, without taking delight in recalling the image of the simplicity of the first times. It is a fair shore, adorned by the hands of nature alone, toward which one forever turns one's eyes, and from which one feels oneself moving away with regret. When innocent and virtuous men liked to have the Gods for witnesses of their deeds, they lived together in the same huts; but having soon become wicked, they wearied of these inconvenient onlookers and banished them to magnificent Temples. At last they drove them out of the Temples in order to settle in them themselves, or at least the Temples of the Gods became indistinguishable from the homes of the citizens. That was the period of the utmost depravation; and the vices were never carried to a greater pitch than when they were, so to speak, seen borne up on columns of marble and carved on Corinthian capitals at the entrance to the Palaces of the Great.

[47] While the conveniences of life increase, the arts improve, and luxury spreads; true courage is enervated, the military virtues vanish, and this too is the work of the sciences and of all the arts that are practiced in the closeness of the study. When the Goths ravaged Greece, the Libraries were saved from fire only because of the opinion spread by one of them, that the enemy should be left furnishings so well suited to distract them from military exercise

and to keep them amused with idle and sedentary occupations. Charles the Eighth found himself master of Tuscany and of the Kingdom of Naples almost without having drawn sword; and his entire Court attributed this unexpected ease to the fact that the Italian Princes and Nobility amused themselves more trying to become ingenious and learned, than they exerted themselves trying to become vigorous and warlike. Indeed, says the sensible man who reports these two episodes, all examples teach us that in this martial polity as well as in all others like it the study of the sciences is much more apt to soften and effeminate men's courage than to strengthen and animate it.[*23*]

[48] The Romans admitted that military virtue died out among them in proportion as they began to be knowledgeable about Paintings, Etchings, Goldsmiths' vessels, and to cultivate the fine arts; and as if this famous land had been destined forever to serve as an example to the other peoples, the rise of the Medicis and the restoration of Letters destroyed once more and perhaps forever the martial reputation which, a few centuries ago, Italy seemed to have recovered.

[49] The ancient Republics of Greece, with the wisdom that was so conspicuous in most of their institutions, had forbidden their Citizens the exercise of all those quiet and sedentary occupations which, by allowing the body to grow slack and corrupted, soon enervate the vigor of the soul. How, indeed, can men overwhelmed by the least need and repelled by the least pain be expected to face up to hunger, thirst, fatigues, dangers, and death. With what courage will soldiers bear up under extreme labors to which they are in no way accustomed? With what spirit will they go on forced marches under Officers who have not even the strength to travel on horseback? Do not cite the renowned valor of all these scientifically trained modern warriors as an objection against me. I hear praised their bravery on a day of battle, but I am not told how they bear up under extreme labors, how they withstand the harshness of the seasons and the inclemency of the weather. A little sunshine or a little snow, the want of a few superfluities, is enough to melt and destroy the best of our armies in a few days. Intrepid warriors, suffer, for once, the truth which you so rarely hear; you are brave, I know; you would have triumphed with Hannibal at Cannae and at Trasimene; with you Caesar would have crossed the Rubicon and

reduced his country to servitude; but it is not with you that the one would have crossed the Alps, and the other vanquished your ancestors.

[50] Success in battles does not always make for success in war, and there is for Generals an art higher than that of winning battles. A man may boldly run into the line of fire, and yet be a very bad officer; even a [common] soldier may need a little more strength and vigor than all that bravery [24] which does not protect him from death; and what difference does it make to the State whether its troops die by fever and cold, or by the enemy's sword?

[51] While the cultivation of the sciences is harmful to the martial qualities, it is even more so to the moral qualities. From our very first years a senseless education adorns our mind and corrupts our judgment. Everywhere I see huge establishments, in which young people are brought up at great expense to learn everything except their duties. Your children will not know their own language, but will speak others that are nowhere in use: they will know how to write Verses they will hardly be able to understand: without being able to disentangle error from truth, they will possess the art of making them unrecognizable to others by specious arguments: but they will not know the meaning of the words magnanimity, equity, temperance, humanity, courage; the sweet name Fatherland will never strike their ear; and if they hear God spoken of at all, it will be less to be in awe than to be in fear of him.* I would as soon, said a Wise man, that my pupil had spent his time on the Tennis Court, at least his body would have been the more fit for it. I know that children have to be kept busy, and that idleness is the danger most to be feared for them. What then should they learn? That is certainly a fine question! Let them learn what they ought to do when they are men;** and not what they ought to forget.[25]

* Pens[ées] Philosoph[iques].

** Such was the education of the Spartans according to the greatest of their Kings. It is well worth considering, says Montaigne, that in this excellent – and in truth monstrous in its perfection – polity of Lycurgus, although it was so very attentive to the nurture of children, whom it regarded as its main responsibility, and although it was situated in the very seat of the Muses, so little mention should be made of doctrine: as if those magnanimous youths, disdainful of every other yoke, required only Teachers of valor, prudence, and justice, instead of our Teachers of science.

Let us now see how the same Author speaks about the ancient Persians. Plato, he says, tells us that the eldest son in their Royal line was brought up as follows.

[52] Our gardens are decorated with statues and our Galleries with paintings. What would you think these masterpieces of art exhibited for public admiration represent? The defenders of the Fatherland? or those still greater men who enriched it with their virtues? No. They are images of all the aberrations of the heart and of the reason, carefully culled from ancient Mythology, and presented to our children's curiosity at an early age; no doubt so that they might have models of bad deeds before their eyes, even before they can read.

[53] What gives rise to all of these abuses, if not the fatal inequality introduced among men by the distinction of talents and the disparagement of the virtues? This is the most obvious effect of all our studies, and the most dangerous of all their consequences. People no longer ask about a man whether he has probity, but whether he has talents; nor about a Book whether it is useful, but whether it is well written. Rewards are lavished upon wits, and virtue remains without honors. There are a thousand prizes for fine discourses, none for fine deeds. Yet, I should like to be told whether the glory attaching to the best of the discourses that will he crowned by this Academy is comparable to the merit of having endowed the prize? [26]

[54] The wise man does not run after fortune; but he is not insensitive to glory; and when he sees it so badly distributed, his

After his birth, he was handed over, not to women, but to Eunuchs who enjoyed the greatest authority with the King, because of their virtue. They assumed responsibility for making his body beautiful and healthy, and after seven years they taught him to ride [25] and to hunt. When he reached his fourteenth year they placed him in the hands of four persons: the wisest, the most just, the most temperate, and the most valiant in the Nation. The first taught him Religion: the second always to be truthful, the third to conquer his appetites, the fourth to fear nothing. All, I would add, to make him good, none to make him learned.

Astyages, in Xenophon, asks Cyrus for an account of his last Lesson: It is, said he, that in our school a big boy who had a small coat gave it to one of his companions who was smaller than himself, and took from him his coat which was larger. Our Preceptor having appointed me judge of this difference, I judged that matters should be left in this state, and that in this respect they each seemed better suited. Whereupon he remonstrated with me for having done badly: because I had paused to consider appropriateness; and one should first of all have attended to justice, which requires that no one be forced in what belongs to him. And he said that he was punished, as we were punished in our villages for having forgotten the aorist of τύπτω. My Schoolmaster would have to deliver me a fine harangue, *in genere demonstrativo*, before he succeeds in persuading me that his school is as good as that one.

virtue, which a little emulation would have animated and turned to the advantage of society, languishes and dies in misery and oblivion. This is what, in the long run, the preference for the agreeable over the useful talents must everywhere bring about, and what experience has only all too fully confirmed since the revival of the sciences and arts. We have Physicists, Geometricians, Chemists, Astronomers, Poets, Musicians, Painters; we no longer have citizens; or if we still have some left, dispersed in our abandoned rural areas, they waste away indigent and despised. Such is the condition to which those who give us bread and our children milk are reduced, and such are the sentiments they get from us.

[55] Nevertheless, I admit that the evil is not as great as it might have become. Eternal foresight, by placing medicinal herbs next to various noxious plants, and the remedy against their injuries into the substance of a number of harmful animals, has taught Sovereigns who are its ministers to imitate its wisdom. By following its example, the great Monarch whose glory will only acquire renewed luster with every succeeding age drew, from the very bosom of the sciences and arts, the sources of a thousand aberrations, those famous societies that are charged both with the dangerous trust of human knowledge and the sacred trust of morals, [a charge which these societies are expected to fulfill] by the care they take to preserve knowledge and morals in all their purity in their own midst, and to require that the members they admit do so as well.

[56] These wise institutions, strengthened by his august successor, and imitated by all the Kings of Europe, will at least act as checks on men of letters who, since they all aspire to the honor of being admitted to the Academies, will watch themselves, and strive to make themselves worthy of it by useful works and irreproachable morals. Those among these Associations that will select for prize competitions honoring literary merit, topics apt to revive the love of virtue in Citizens' hearts, will show that such love reigns among them, and give Peoples the altogether rare and sweet pleasure of seeing learned societies dedicated to disseminating among Mankind not only [27] agreeable enlightenment, but also salutary teachings.

[57] Therefore, do not urge as an objection against me what I regard as but one more proof. So many precautions all too clearly show the need for them, and no one looks for remedies to nonexistent evils. Why should the fact that they are inadequate stamp them

as also common remedies? So many organizations established for the benefit of the learned are all the more apt to make the objects of the sciences appear impressive and to direct men's minds to their cultivation. To judge by the precautions being taken, it would appear that there is a surplus of Plowmen and fear of a shortage of Philosophers. I do not wish here to venture a comparison between agriculture and philosophy, it would not be tolerated. I will only ask, what is Philosophy? What do the writings of the best-known philosophers contain? What are the Lessons of these lovers of wisdom? To listen to them, might one not take them for a troop of charlatans, each hawking from his own stand on a public square; Come to me, I am the only one who does not deceive? One claims that there are no bodies and that everything is in idea. Another, that there is no substance other than matter and no God other than the world. This one urges that there are neither virtues nor vices, and that moral good and evil are chimeras. That other, that men are wolves and may devour one another in good conscience. O great Philosophers! why do you not restrict these profitable Lessons for your friends and your children; you would soon reap the reward for them, and we would not have to fear finding one of your followers among our own friends and children.

[58] These, then, are the wonderful men on whom the esteem of their contemporaries was lavished during their lifetimes, and for whom immortality was reserved after their deaths! These are the wise maxims we have received from them and which we will transmit from age to age to our descendants. Did Paganism, given to all the aberrations of human reason, leave to posterity anything comparable to the shameful memorials which Printing has readied for it in the reign of the Gospel? The impious writings of such men as Leucippus and Diagoras perished with them. The art of immortalizing [*28*] the extravagances of the human mind had not yet been invented. But thanks to Typography* and to the use we make of

* Considering the frightful disorders Printing has already caused in Europe, and judging of the future by the progress this evil daily makes, it is easy to foresee that before long sovereigns will take as many pains to banish this terrible art from their States as they took to establish it in them. Sultan Ahmed yielding to the importunacies of some supposed men of taste had consented to establish a Printing Shop in Constantinople. But the press had hardly begun to run when it had to be destroyed and the equipment to be thrown into a well. It is said that the Caliph Omar, when asked what should be done with the library of Alexandria, answered

it, the dangerous reveries of such men as Hobbes and Spinoza will last forever. Go, famed writings of which our Forefathers' ignorance and rusticity would have been incapable; go to our descendants in company with those still more dangerous works that exude the corruption of our century's morals, and together transmit to future centuries a faithful history of the progress and the benefits of our sciences and our arts. If they read you, you will leave them in no doubt regarding the question we are debating today: and unless they are more devoid of sense than are we, they will raise their hands to Heaven and with a bitter heart say: "Almighty God, you who hold all Minds in your hands, deliver us from our Fathers' Enlightenment and fatal arts, and restore us to ignorance, innocence, and poverty, the only goods that can make for our happiness and that are precious in your sight."

[59] But if the progress of the sciences and the arts has added nothing to our genuine felicity; if it has corrupted our morals, and if the corruption of morals has injured purity of taste, what are we to think of that crowd of Popularizers who have removed the difficulties which guarded the access to the Temple of [29] the Muses, and which nature had placed there as a trial of the strength of those who might be tempted to know? What are we to think of those Anthologizers of works which have indiscreetly broken down the gate of the Sciences and introduced into their Sanctuary a populace unworthy of coming near it; whereas what would have been desirable is to have had all those who could not go far in a career in Letters deterred from the outset, and become involved in Arts useful to society? Someone who his whole life long will remain a bad versifier or an inferior Geometer, might perhaps have become a great clothier. Those whom nature intended as her disciples had no need of masters. Such men as Verulam, Descartes and Newton, these Preceptors of Mankind, had none themselves, and indeed what guides could have led them as far as their own vast genius carried them? Ordinary Masters could only have shrunk their

in these terms If the Books in this library contain things contrary to the Koran, they are bad and ought to be burned. If they contain nothing but the doctrine of the Koran, burn them still: they are superfluous. Our Learned men have cited this reasoning as the height of absurdity. Yet suppose Gregory the Great in the place of Omar and the Gospel in the place of the Koran, the Library would still have been burned, and it might perhaps be the finest episode in that Illustrious Pontiff's life.

understanding by cramping it within the narrow scope of their own: The first obstacles taught them to exert themselves, and to practice covering the immense distance which they traveled. If a few men are to be allowed to devote themselves to the study of the Sciences and the Arts, it must be only those who feel they have the strength to go forth alone in their footsteps, and to overtake them: It belongs to this small number to raise monuments to the glory of the human mind. But if one wants nothing to be beyond their genius, nothing may be beyond their hopes. This is the only encouragement they need. The soul insensibly proportions itself to the objects that occupy it, and it is great occasions that make great men. The Prince of Eloquence was Consul of Rome, and the greatest, perhaps, of Philosophers, Lord Chancellor of England. Is it likely that if the one had merely occupied a chair in some University, and the other received but a modest pension from an Academy; is it likely, I say, that their works would not have smacked of their condition? Let Kings therefore not disdain admitting into their councils the people most capable of counseling them well: let them reject the old prejudice invented by the pride of the Great, that the art of leading Peoples is more difficult than that of enlightening them: as if [30] it were easier to move men to act well of their own accord than to compel them to do so by force. Let learned men of the first rank find honorable asylum in their courts. Let them there receive the only reward worthy of them; by the credit they enjoy, to contribute to the happiness of the Peoples to whom they will have taught wisdom. Only then will it be possible to see what virtue, science and authority, animated by a noble emulation and working in concert for the felicity of Mankind, can do. But as long as power remains by itself on one side; enlightenment and wisdom by themselves on the other; the learned will rarely think great things, Princes will more rarely still perform fine ones, and Peoples will continue to be base, corrupt, and wretched.

[60] As for ourselves, vulgar men, to whom Heaven has not vouchsafed such great talents and whom it does not destine for so much glory, let us remain in our obscurity. Let us not run after a reputation which would escape us, and which, in the present state of things, would never return to us what it would have cost us, even if we had every title to obtain it. What good is it to seek our happiness in someone else's opinion if we can find it within

ourselves? Let us leave to others the care of instructing Peoples in their duties, and confine ourselves to fulfilling our own duties well, we have no need of knowing more.

[61] O virtue! Sublime science of simple souls, are so many efforts and so much equipment really required to know you? Are not your principles engraved in all hearts, and is it not enough in order to learn your Laws to return into oneself and to listen to the voice of one's conscience in the silence of the passions? That is genuine Philosophy, let us know how to rest content with it; and without envying the glory of those famous men who render themselves immortal in the Republic of Letters, let us try to place between them and ourselves the glorious distinction formerly seen between two great Peoples; that the one knew how to speak well, and the other, to act well.

[*OC* III, *31*]

LETTER to Monsieur L'ABBÉ RAYNAL

Writer with the *Mercure de France*

[1] I owe thanks, sir, to the persons who relayed to you the observations which you have the goodness of conveying to me, and I shall try to profit from them; I must, however, confess to you that I find my Censors a little harsh on my logic, and I suspect that they would have proven less punctilious if I had shared their views. At least it seems to me that if they themselves had displayed some of the rigorous precision which they demand of me, I would not need the clarifications for which I am about to ask them.

[2] *The Writer*, they say, *seems to prefer the condition of Europe prior to the restoration of the Sciences; a state worse than ignorance because of the false knowledge or of the jargon that prevailed.* The Writer of this remark seems to make me say that false knowledge or scholastic jargon is preferable to Science, whereas I myself said that it is worse than ignorance; but how does he understand the word *condition*? Is he referring to enlightenment or to morals, or does he confuse two things I took such pains to distinguish? However, since this is the heart of the matter, I admit that it is most awkward of me to have only appeared to take a stand on this issue.

[3] They add that *the Writer prefers rusticity to politeness.*

[4] It is true that the Writer prefers rusticity to the prideful and false politeness of our century, and he has stated the reason for his preference. *And that he seeks to do away with all Learned men and Artists.* Very well, since you insist, I agree to eliminate all the distinctions I had drawn.

[5] *He should*, they go on to say, *have indicated the point with reference to which he* [*32*] *speaks of a period of decadence.* I did more; I cast my thesis in the form of a general proposition: I assigned this first stage in the decadence of morals to the first moment at which Letters came to be cultivated in any country of the world, and I found the progress of these two things always to be directly proportional. *And by going back to that first period, to compare the morals of those times with ours.* I would have done so in still greater detail in a full-length book.

[6] *Short of that, we do not see how far back one would have to go, lest it be to the time of the Apostles.* I do not myself see any objection to doing so, if that should, in fact, be the case. But I ask my Censor in all fairness: Would he have had me say that the time of the deepest ignorance was the time of the Apostles?

[7] They add that, *regarding luxury, it is known that sound policy calls for it to be prohibited in small States, but that the case of a kingdom such as, for example, France, is altogether different. The reasons why it is so, are well known.* Have I not here, once again, cause for complaint? These reasons are the very reasons to which I tried to address myself. Well or ill, I did address myself to them. Now, one can scarcely show greater contempt for a Writer than to urge nothing more in reply to him than the very arguments he has refuted. Does the difficulty they have to resolve nevertheless have to be pointed out to them? It is this: *What will become of virtue, when one has to get rich at all cost?** That is what I asked them, and what I ask them still.

[8] As for the following two observations, the first of which begins with the words: *Finally, the objection is*, and the other of which begins: *but what more directly concerns*; I beg the Reader to spare me the trouble of transcribing them. The Academy had asked me whether the restoration of the Sciences and Arts had contributed to the purification of morals. That was the problem I had to solve: yet here I am being charged with not having solved a different problem. Surely that is, to say the least, a very odd criticism. Yet I am almost in the position of having to beg the Reader's pardon for having anticipated it, as that is what he might believe happened when he reads the last five or six pages of my discourse. [*33*]

[9] Besides, if my Censors continue to insist on practical conclusions, I promise them very clearly spelled-out ones in my first reply.

[10] Regarding the uselessness of sumptuary Laws in uprooting luxury once it has taken a firm hold, they say that *the Writer is not unaware of what can be said on the subject.* Indeed not. I am not unaware of the fact that once a man is dead one does not call the Doctor.

* Disc[ourse], p. 18.

[11] *It is impossible to be too emphatic about truths that clash so head-on with the general taste, and it is important to deny chicanery every possible hold.* I am not altogether of the same opinion, and I believe that children should be left some baubles.

[12] *Many Readers would also prefer them presented in a plain style rather than in the formal dress called for in Academy Discourses.* I very much share those Readers' taste. This, then, is a point on which I can agree with my Censors' sentiment, and I do so forthwith.

[13] I do not know who the opponent is whom I am threatened with in the *Postscript*. Whoever he might be, I cannot bring myself to reply to a work before I have read it, nor to consider myself defeated before I have been attacked.

[14] Besides, regardless of whether I answer the criticisms I am told are forthcoming, or leave it at publishing the expanded work that is requested of me, I warn my Censors that they might not find in them the changes they hope for. I anticipate that when it comes to having to defend myself, I will not hesitate to accept all the consequences that follow from my principles.

[15] I know in advance with what great words I will be attacked. Enlightenment, knowledge, laws, morality, reason, propriety, considerateness, gentleness, amenity, politeness, education, etc. To all of this I will only answer with two other words which ring even more loudly in my ear. Virtue, truth! I will call out incessantly; truth, virtue! If anyone sees no more than words in that, I have nothing further to say to him.

[*OC* III, *35*]

Observations By Jean-Jacques Rousseau of Geneva

On the Answer made to his Discourse

[1] I owe thanks rather than a reply to the Anonymous Writer who has just honored my Discourse with an Answer. But the claims of gratitude will not cause me to forget the claims of truth; nor will I forget that whenever reason is at issue, men are restored to the right of Nature, and recover their original equality.

[2] The Discourse to which I have to reply is full of very true and very well-proved things, to which I have nothing to answer: for although in it I am called Doctor, I should be very sorry to be one of those who have an answer to everything.

[3] My defense will be no less easy. It will be restricted to a comparison between my sentiment and the truths urged against me; for if I prove that they do not affect it, I will, I believe, have defended it adequately.

[4] I can reduce all the Propositions established by my Adversary to two principal points; one involves the praise of the Sciences; the other deals with their abuse. I shall examine them separately.

[5] The tone of the Answer suggests a wish to have had me speak far worse of the Sciences than I in fact did. It assumes that the praise of them found at the beginning of my Discourse must have cost me a great [*36*] deal; it is, according to the Writer, an acknowledgment wrung from me by the truth, and which I was not slow in retracting.

[6] If this acknowledgment is praise wrung from me by the truth, then it would seem that I did think as well of the Sciences as I said I did; the good the Writer himself says of them is then not at odds with my sentiment. The admission is, he says, wrung from me by force: so much the better for my cause, since it shows that with me truth has greater force than has inclination. But on what grounds is this praise judged to be forced? Is it for being badly done? To

judge a Writer's sincerity by this novel principle would be to put it to a rather terrifying test. Is it for being too short? It seems to me that I might easily have said less in more pages. It is, he says, because I retracted; I do not know where I committed that fault; and all I can answer is that it was not my intention to do so.

[7] Science in itself is very good, that is obvious; and one would have to have taken leave of good sense, to maintain the contrary. The Author of all things is the fountain of truth; to know everything is one of his divine attributes. To acquire knowledge and to extend one's enlightenment is, then, in a way to participate in the supreme intelligence. It is in this sense that I praised knowledge, and this is the sense in which my Adversary praises it. He goes on to speak at length about the various kinds of utility Man can derive from the Sciences and Arts; and I should readily have said as much, if this had been my topic. We are thus perfectly agreed on this point.

[8] But how does it happen that the Sciences, so pure in their source and so praiseworthy in their end, give rise to so many impieties, so many heresies, so many errors, so many absurd systems, so many vexations, so much foolishness, so many bitter Satires, so many wretched Romances, so many licentious Poems, so many obscene Books; and in those who cultivate them, so much pride, so much greed, so much malice, so many intrigues, so many jealousies, so many lies, so many evil deeds, so many calumnies, so many cowardly and shameful flatteries? I had said that it is because Science, however beautiful, however sublime, is not made for man; that his mind is too limited to make much progress in it, and his heart too full of passions to keep him from putting it to bad use; [37] that it is sufficient for him to study his duties well, and that everyone has received all the light he needs for such study. My Adversary, for his part, admits that the Sciences become harmful when they are abused and that many do indeed abuse them. In this we are not, I believe, saying such very different things; I do, it is true, add that they are much abused, and that they are always abused, and it does not seem to me that the contrary has been upheld in the Answer.

[9] I am therefore confident that our principles, and hence all the propositions that can be deduced from them, do not in any way conflict, and that is what I had to prove. Yet, when it comes to drawing conclusions, our conclusions are at odds. Mine was that,

since the Sciences harm morals more than they benefit society, it would be preferable to have men pursue them less eagerly. My Adversary's is that, although the Sciences do much harm, they ought nevertheless to be cultivated because of the good they do. I leave it not to the Public, but to the small number of true Philosophers, to decide which of these two conclusions ought to be preferred.

[10] It remains for me to make a few slight Observations on some passages in the Answer which seemed to me to be somewhat lacking in the precision I readily admire in the rest, and which may thereby have contributed to the erroneous conclusion the Writer draws from them.

[11] The work begins with some personal remarks to which I shall refer only insofar as they bear on the question. The Writer honors me with a good deal of praise, and so certainly gives me a ready opening. But there is too little common measure in such matters: a respectful silence about the objects of our admiration is often more becoming than is indiscreet praise.* [*38*]

[12] My Discourse, it is said, is cause for surprise;* it seems to me that this calls for clarification. Surprise is also expressed at seeing it crowned; yet it is not so very extraordinary to see mediocre writings crowned. Taken in any other sense, this surprise would do the Academy of Dijon as much honor as it would prove insulting to the integrity of Academies in general; and the advantage I might derive from it for my cause is readily apparent.

* All Princes, good and bad, will always be obsequiously and indiscriminately praised, so long as there are Courtiers and Men of Letters. As for Princes who are great Men, they require more moderate and judicious praise. Flattery offends their virtue, and even praise may tarnish their glory. At least, I know that Trajan would be much greater in my eyes if Pliny had never written. If Alexander had really been what he affected to appear, he would not have given any thought to his portrait [*38*] or to his Statue; as for his Panegyric, he would have allowed none but a Lacedaemonian to deliver it, even at the risk of remaining without one. The only praise worthy of a King is that heard not from the mercenary mouth of an Orator, but from the voice of a free People.

* The question itself might cause surprise: a great and fine question if ever there was one, and which might not soon be raised again. The French Academy has just proposed a very similar subject for the prize in eloquence for the year 1752. The point is to affirm that *The Love of Letters Inspires the Love of Virtue*. The Academy did not see fit to leave such a subject in the form of a problem; and for the occasion this wise Company doubled the time it used to allow Writers, even for the most difficult subjects.

[13] In most agreeably turned Phrases I am taxed with a contradiction between my conduct and my doctrine; I am reproached with myself having cultivated studies which I condemn;* since Science and Virtue are incompatible, as I am supposed to be at pains to prove, I am asked in a somewhat insistent tone how I dare use the one in speaking on behalf of the other.

[14] It is clever to involve me in the issue in this way; such a personal reference cannot fail to embarrass me in my Answer, or rather Answers; for unfortunately I have more than one. Let us at least try to have them make up in precision what they lack in elegance. [*39*]

[15] 1. The cultivation of the Sciences corrupts a nation's morals, this is what I dared to maintain, this is what I dare believe I have proved. But how could I have said that Science and Virtue are incompatible in every Individual, I who exhorted Princes to invite the truly Learned to their Court, and to place their trust in them, so that we might for once see what Science and Virtue combined can do for the happiness of mankind? These truly Learned men are few in number, I admit; for it takes a combination of great talents and great Virtues to put Science to good use; which is something one can barely hope for in a few privileged souls, but ought not to expect from an entire people. One can therefore not conclude from my principles that a man cannot be both learned and virtuous.

[16] 2. One can even less [plausibly] charge me personally with this supposed contradiction, even if it really did exist. I adore Virtue, my heart bears me witness of it; it also tells me all too clearly how great the distance is between this love and the conduct that makes for a virtuous man; besides, I am very far from possessing Science, and farther still from pretending that I do. I should have thought that my candid admission at the beginning of my Discourse would have protected me against this imputation; I feared, rather, that I would be accused of passing judgment on things I do not know. It is readily enough evident that I could not

* Unlike many others, I cannot justify myself by maintaining that our education does not depend on ourselves, and that we are not consulted about being poisoned: I threw myself into study most willingly; and I gave it up even more wholeheartedly when I realized into what turmoil it threw my soul without any profit to my reason. I want nothing more to do with a deceitful profession in which one believes one is doing much for wisdom while doing everything for vanity.

possibly avoid both reproaches. Who knows whether someone might not even decide to combine them, if I do not promptly refute this one, however undeserved it may be.

[17] 3. I might in this connection report what the Church Fathers used to say regarding the worldly Sciences which they despised, and of which they nevertheless made use to combat the Heathen Philosophers. I could cite the comparison they used to draw between these worldly sciences and the jewelry of the Egyptians stolen by the Israelites: but as a final Answer, I will leave it at submitting the following question: If someone came to kill me and I had the good fortune to seize his weapon, would I be forbidden to use it to drive him off, before I threw it away?

[18] If the contradiction I am reproached with does not exist; [*40*] then it is not necessary to suppose that I simply sought to amuse myself with a frivolous paradox; and it seems to me all the less necessary to do so, as the tone I took, bad as it may have been, is at least not the tone of witticisms.

[19] It is time to have done with what pertains to me: to speak of oneself never profits a man; and it is an indiscretion which, even when it is forced on one, the Public does not readily forgive. Truth is so independent of those who attack and of those who defend it, that Writers who argue about it should altogether forget one another; it would save a great deal of ink and paper. But this rule, so easy to follow with respect to myself, is not at all easy to follow with respect to my Adversary; and this difference does not redound to the advantage of my reply.

[20] The Writer, noting that I attack the Sciences and Arts in terms of their effect on morals, answers me with an inventory of the uses to which they are put in all states; which is as if, in order to justify an accused person, all one did was to prove that he is quite well, most skillful, or very rich. As long as it is granted me that the Arts and Sciences make us bad people, I shall not deny that they also greatly contribute to our convenience; this is one more respect in which they are like most vices.

[21] The Writer goes further, and also claims that we have to study in order to admire the beauties of the universe, and that even the spectacle of nature, exhibited, it would seem, to the eyes of all for the instruction of simple men, requires a great deal of instruction on the part of Observers, if they are to perceive it. I must admit

that this proposition surprises me: is it that all men are ordered to be Philosophers, or that only Philosophers are ordered to believe in God? Scripture in a thousand places exhorts us to revere the greatness and goodness of God in the wonders of his works; I do not think that it has anywhere prescribed to us the study of Physics, nor that the Author of Nature is less well adored by me, who know nothing, than by him who knows and the cedar, and the hyssop, and the trunk of the fly, and that of the Elephant.

[22] One always believes one has said what the Sciences do, [*41*] when one has said what they should do. Yet the two seem to me quite different: the study of the Universe should elevate man to his Creator, I know; but it only elevates human vanity. The Philosopher, flattering himself that he fathoms God's secrets, dares to liken his supposed wisdom to eternal wisdom: he approves, he blames, he corrects, he prescribes laws to nature and limits to the Divinity; and while he is busy with his vain systems, and takes endless pains to arrange the machine of the world, the Plowman who sees the rain and the sun by turns fertilize his field admires, praises and blesses the hand from which he receives these graces, without troubling himself about how they come to him. He does not seek to justify his ignorance or his vices by his incredulity. He does not censure God's works, nor challenge his master in order to display his self-importance. Never will the impious remark of Alfonso X occur to one of the vulgar: that blasphemy was reserved for a learned mouth.

[23] *Man's natural curiosity*, they go on, *inspires him with the desire to learn*. He should therefore endeavor to curb it, like all his natural inclinations. *His needs make him feel the necessity of doing so.* In a good many respects knowledge is useful; yet savages are men, and they do not feel this necessity; *his occupations oblige him to do so.* They far more often oblige him to give up study in order to attend to his duties.* *His progress lets him taste its pleasure*. He should for that very reason be suspicious of it. *His first discoveries increase his greed for knowledge*. That does indeed, happen to those who have talent. *The more he knows, the more aware he is of having to acquire knowledge*; that is to say that the time he loses only serves to excite

* It is a bad mark against a society that those who lead it need so much Science; if men were what they ought to be, they would scarcely need to study in order to learn the things they have to do.

him to lose more: only in a very few men of genius does insight into their own ignorance grow as they learn, and they are the only ones for whom study may be good: almost as soon as small minds have learned something, they believe they know everything, [*42*] and there is no sort of foolishness which this conviction will not make them say or do. *The more settled knowledge a man has, the easier it is for him to do well.* It is evident that in saying this, the Writer has consulted his heart far more than he has observed men.

[24] He further says that it is good to know evil so as to learn to shun it; and he implies that one can be assured of one's virtue only after having put it to trial. These maxims are, at the very least, doubtful, and open to much discussion. It is not certain that in order to learn to do well, one has to know how many ways there are of doing evil. We have a guide within, far more infallible than all the books, and which never forsakes us when we are in need. It would suffice to guide us in innocence, if we were willing always to heed it; and besides, how can one be obliged to test one's strength in order to be sure of one's virtue, when one way to practice virtue is to shun occasions for vice?

[25] The wise man is constantly on his guard, and ever suspicious of his own strength: he keeps all his courage in reserve for times of need, and never runs unnecessary risks. The swaggerer is the one who forever boasts of more than he can do, and who, after having stood up to and insulted everybody, allows himself to be defeated in the first encounter. I should like to know which of these two portraits best resembles a Philosopher at grips with his passions.

[26] I am reproached with having preferred to take my examples of virtue from among the ancients. It is very likely that I would have found even more, if I could have reached still farther back: I also mentioned one modern people, and it is not my fault that I found only one. I am furthermore reproached in a general maxim with drawing abhorrent comparisons prompted, it is said, less by enthusiasm and fair-mindedness than by envy of my countrymen and ill-humor toward my contemporaries. Yet, no one, perhaps, loves his country and his compatriots as much as I do. Beyond that, I have only one word to say in reply. I have stated my arguments, and they are what has to be weighed. As for my motives, they must be left to be judged by him who alone may judge of them.

[27] I ought not here pass over in silence a weighty objection [*43*] that had already been addressed to me by a Philosopher:* *Is not*, I am asked here, *the difference that is sometimes observed between the morals of different countries and different times due to climate, temperament, the lack of opportunity, the want of an object, the economy of the government, the Customs, the Laws, to any cause other than the Sciences?*

[28] The question implies broad views and it would require more extensive clarification than would be appropriate in the present writing. Besides, the very hidden but very real relations between the nature of government on the one hand, and the genius, morals, and knowledge of the citizens on the other, would have to be examined; and this would involve me in delicate discussions that might lead me too far. Besides, it would be difficult for me to speak about government without giving my Adversary an undue advantage; and all things considered, these are inquiries best pursued in Geneva, and under different circumstances.

[29] I go on to an accusation that is far more serious than the preceding objection. I shall transcribe it literally; for it is important to place it faithfully before the Reader's eyes.

[30] *The more a Christian examines the authenticity of his Titles, the more secure is he in the possession of his belief; the more he studies revelation, the more strengthened is he in his faith: He discovers its origin and excellence in the divine Scriptures; he follows its development from one century to the next in the learned writings of the Church Fathers; he finds examples and models of it in the Books of ethics and the sacred chronicles.*

[31] *What! shall ignorance deprive Religion or virtue of such powerful supports! and shall a Doctor from Geneva openly teach that it is responsible for the wantonness of morals! Such a strange paradox would cause even greater consternation if it were not well known that for those who have no other rule than their individual mind the singularity of a system, however dangerous, is but one more reason* [*in its favor*].

[32] I dare ask the Writer; how could he ever have placed such an interpretation on the principles I established? How could he accuse me of blaming the study of Religion, when I blame the study of our vain Sciences chiefly because it turns us away from the study

* Pre[face] to the *Encycl*[*opedia*].

[*44*] of our duties? And what is the study of a Christian's duties, if not the study of his Religion?

[33] I should probably have blamed explicitly all the childish subtleties of Scholasticism which only destroy the spirit of Religion on pretext of elucidating its principles, by substituting scientific pride for christian humility. I should have spoken out more forcefully against the rash Ministers who first dared to lay a hand on the Ark in order with their feeble learning to bolster a structure that is upheld by the hand of God. I should have waxed indignant against those frivolous men who with their wretched hair-splitting have degraded the sublime simplicity of the Gospel, and reduced the doctrine of Jesus Christ to syllogisms. But my present concern is to defend myself, not to attack.

[34] I see that the best way to put an end to this disputation is with history and facts. If I could show in a few words what the relations between the Sciences and Religion have been from the very first, it might help settle the point at issue.

[35] The People God chose for himself never cultivated the Sciences, and it was never advised to study them; yet if such study had served a useful purpose, it would have needed it more than any other. On the contrary, their Leaders always bent all their efforts on keeping them as separate as possible from the idolatrous and learned Nations adjoining them. A precaution which, in their case, was less necessary with regard to Nations of the second than of the first kind: for this weak and crude People was far more liable to be seduced by the impostures of the Priests of Baal than by the Sophisms of the Philosophers.

[36] Even after its frequent dispersions amongst the Egyptians and the Greeks, Science had a very difficult time taking root in the Hebrews' heads. Josephus and Philo who, anywhere else, would have been but mediocre men, were prodigies among them. The Sadducees, recognizable by their irreligiousness, were the Philosophers of Jerusalem; the Pharisees, great hypocrites,* were its [*45*]

* The same hatred and mutual contempt could be seen to reign between these two parties, that has at all times reigned between the Doctors and the Philosophers; that is to say between those who use their heads as a storehouse for other people's Science and those who lay claim to a head of their [*45*] own. Pit the music master and the dancing master of the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* against one another, you will have the antiquarian and the wit, the Chemist and the Man of Letters; the jurist and the Physician; the Geometer and the Versifier; the Theologian and

Doctors. Although they more or less restricted their Science to the study of the law, they pursued this study with typically dogmatic ostentation and self-importance; they also observed all the practices of Religion with the utmost care; but the Gospel acquaints us with the spirit of that exactitude, and how it was to be judged: moreover, they all had very little Science and a great deal of pride; and it is not in this respect that they most differed from our Doctors today.

[37] In establishing the new Law, Jesus Christ did not wish to entrust his doctrine and ministry to scholars. In making his choice he followed the preference he on all occasions showed for the lowly and simple. And in his instruction of his disciples, there is not a single learned or scientific word to be found, lest it be to indicate his contempt for everything of that kind.

[38] After the death of Jesus Christ, twelve poor fishermen and artisans undertook to instruct and convert the world. Their method was simple; they preached artlessly but with utter conviction, and of all the miracles with which God honored their faith, the most striking was the saintliness of their lives; the disciples followed this example, and their success was prodigious. Alarmed, the Pagan Priests gave Princes to understand that the state was lost because donations were dwindling. Persecutions arose, and the persecutors only hastened the progress of the Religion they sought to stifle. All Christians rushed to martyrdom, all Peoples rushed to Baptism: the history of these first times is a continual marvel.

[39] However, the Priests of the idols, not content with persecuting Christians, began to calumny them; the Philosophers, finding a Religion that preached humility unrewarding, joined their Priests. Ridicule and insults were showered [*46*] on the new Sect from all sides. They had to take up the pen to defend themselves. Saint Justin the Martyr* was the first to write [*47*] an Apology of his

the Philosopher; to judge soundly of all these People, one need only consult them, and listen to what each one tells you, not about himself, but about the others.

* These first writers, who sealed the testimony of their pen with their blood, would today be very scandalous Writers; for they upheld exactly the same sentiment I uphold. In his exchange with Tripho, Saint Justin reviews the various Sects of Philosophers he had formerly tried, and makes them appear so ridiculous that one might believe oneself to be reading a Dialogue by Lucian: and Tertullian's Apology shows how offended the first Christians were to be taken for Philosophers.

Indeed, it would be rather discreditable to Philosophy to have the pernicious

faith. The Pagans were attacked in turn; to attack them was to defeat them; the first successes encouraged new writers: on the pretext of exposing the depravity of Paganism, they threw themselves into mythology and erudition;** they wanted to display Science and wit, large numbers of Books were published, and morals began to relax.

[40] Soon they ceased to be satisfied with the simplicity of the Gospel and the faith of the Apostles, they constantly wanted to prove themselves cleverer than their predecessors. Every dogma became an occasion for hair-splitting; everyone wanted to uphold his opinion, no one wanted to yield. The ambition to be the Leader of a Sect arose, heresies proliferated on all sides.

maxims and the impious dogmas of its various Sects exposed. The Epicureans denied all providence, the Academics doubted the existence of the Divinity, and the Stoics the immortality of the soul. The sentiments entertained by the less famous Sects were no better; here is a sample of those of Theodorus, the head of one of the two branches of the Cyrenaics, as reported by Diogenes Laertius. "He discarded friendship because it was without advantage to the ignorant or to the learned . . . He said that it was reasonable for a prudent man not to risk his life for his fatherland, and indeed that prudence should not be cast aside for the benefit of the ignorant. He held that the wise man might steal and commit adultery and sacrilege when it was opportune for him to do so. None of these are shameful by nature. They should be freed of the opinion of the vulgar which is due to fools and ignoramuses . . . The wise man can, publicly, without shame, and without becoming an object of reproach, go to prostitutes."

These are one man's opinions, I know; but is there a single one of all the Sects that did not fall into some dangerous error; and what are we to say about the distinction between two doctrines so eagerly embraced by all Philosophers, and with which they professed in secret sentiments that were the opposite of those which they professed in public? Pythagoras was the first to resort to the internal doctrine; he disclosed it to his disciples only after long trials and with the greatest mystery; he gave them secret lessons in Atheism while solemnly offering Sacrifices to Jupiter. The Philosophers found that this proceeding suited them so well that it spread rapidly throughout Greece, and from Greece to Rome, as appears from the works of Cicero, who in the company of his friend laughed at the immortal Gods he so emphatically invoked from the Rostrum. The internal doctrine was not transmitted from Europe to China; but, there too, it was born together with Philosophy; and to it the Chinese owe the great number of Atheists or Philosophers in their midst. The History of this fatal doctrine, written by a learned and sincere man, would prove a terrible blow to ancient as well as to modern Philosophy. But Philosophy will always defy reason, truth, and time itself, because it has its source in human pride, stronger than all these things.

** Clement of Alexandria has been justly blamed for displaying in his writings a profane erudition that ill becomes a Christian. However, it would seem that at that time it was excusable to acquaint oneself with the teaching against which one had to defend oneself. But who can help laughing at all the trouble our Scholars nowadays take to elucidate the reveries of mythology?

[41] Before long ill-temper and violence joined the fray. Those ever so gentle Christians, who had only known how to yield their throat to the knife, became one another's frenzied persecutors, worse than the idolaters: everyone partook in the same excesses, and the party of truth was upheld no more moderately than was the party of error.

[42] Another even more dangerous evil arose from the same source. It was the introduction of ancient Philosophy into Christian doctrine. By dint of studying the Greek Philosophers, they believed they saw connections between it and Christianity. They dared to believe that Religion would become more respectable for being wrapped in the authority of Philosophy; there was a time when one had to be a Platonist in order to be Orthodox; and first Plato, and later Aristotle very nearly came to be placed on the Altar alongside of Jesus Christ.

[43] The Church more than once rose up against these excesses. Its most illustrious defenders frequently deplored them in forceful and energetic terms: frequently they attempted to expel from it all the worldly Science, which soiled its [*48*] purity. One of the most illustrious Popes carried zeal to such an extreme as to maintain that it is shameful to subject the word of God to the rules of Grammar.

[44] But they cried out to no avail; swept along by the torrent, they were compelled to conform to the practice they condemned; and it was in a most learned fashion that most of them inveighed against the progress of the Sciences.

[45] After prolonged turmoil, things finally settled down. In about the tenth century, the torch of the Sciences ceased to light the earth; the Clergy remained plunged in an ignorance I do not wish to justify, since it affected things they ought to know no less than things that are of no use to them, but due to which the Church at least achieved a little more quiet than it had experienced until then.

[46] After the revival of Letters, divisions soon arose anew, which were more terrible than ever. Learned Men stirred up the quarrel, learned Men kept it alive, and the most able always proved to be the most stubborn. Conferences between the Doctors of the different parties proved to be of no avail: no one brought to them a love of reconciliation or perhaps even of the truth; all brought to them only the desire to shine at their Adversary's expense; everyone

wanted to prevail, no one wanted to learn; the stronger silenced the weaker; disputation always ended in insults, and persecution was its invariable consequence. God only knows when all these evils will cease.

[47] Today the Sciences flourish, Literature and the Arts shine brightly among us; what benefit has Religion derived from it? Let us ask the many Philosophers who pride themselves on not having any. Our Libraries overflow with Books on Theology; and Casuists abound among us. In the past we had Saints and no Casuists. Science spreads, and faith disappears. Everyone wants to teach how to act well, and no one wants to learn it; we have all become Doctors, and have ceased to be Christians.

[48] No, it is not with so much Art and circumstance that the Gospel spread through the whole Universe, and that its touching beauty entered men's hearts. This divine Book, [*49*] the only book a Christian needs, and the most useful of all books even for those who might not be Christians, only needs to be meditated to convey to the soul love for its Author, and the will to carry out his precepts. Never did virtue speak in such gentle terms; never did the deepest wisdom express itself with such energy and simplicity. One never leaves off reading it without feeling a better person than before. O you, Ministers of the Law that is there proclaimed to me, take fewer pains to instruct me about so many useless things. Leave be all those Learned Books, that can neither convince nor move me. Prostrate yourselves at the feet of the God of mercy you are charged with making me know and love; ask him to give you the profound humility which you must preach to me. Do not spread before my eyes the prideful Science or the indecent pomp that dishonor you and disgust me; be moved yourselves, if you would have me be moved; and above all, show me by your conduct the practice of the Law in which you claim to instruct me. You need know or teach me nothing more, and your ministry is accomplished. None of this involves Letters or Philosophy. That is how the Gospel should be practiced and preached, and how its first defenders made it triumph in all the Nations, *not in the manner of Aristotle*, the Church Fathers used to say, *but in the Fisherman's*.

[49] I sense I grow prolix, but I believed I could not avoid going into some detail on an issue as important as this. Besides, impatient Readers must recognize that there are great advantages to being the

critic: for while one can attack with a single word, it takes pages to defend oneself.

[50] I proceed to the second part of the Answer, about which I shall try to be briefer, although I find that there are hardly fewer observations to be made regarding it.

[51] *It is not from the Sciences,* I am told, *but from the lap of riches, that softness and luxury have at all times been born.* Nor had I said that luxury was born of the Sciences; I had said, rather, that both were born together and that one hardly ever goes without the other. Here is how I would order this genealogy. The first source of evil is inequality; from inequality arose riches; for the words poor [50] and rich are relative, and wherever men are equal there is neither rich nor poor. From riches are born luxury and idleness; from luxury arose the fine Arts, and from idleness the Sciences. *At no time have riches been the portion of the Learned.* This is precisely why the evil is even greater, the rich and the learned only corrupt one another. If the rich were more learned or the learned more rich; these would be less craven flatterers; the others would love base flattery less, and everyone would be the better for it. So much is evident from the small number of those who have the good fortune to be both learned and rich. *For every Plato who is wealthy, for every Aristippus who is respected at Court, how many Philosophers are reduced to beggary, wrapped in their own virtue and ignored in their solitude?* I do not deny that a great many Philosophers are very poor, and surely most distressed to be so: nor do I doubt that most of them owe their Philosophy solely to their poverty: but even if I were ready to assume that they are virtuous, is it from their morals, which the people does not see, that it would learn to reform its own? *The Learned have neither the taste, nor the leisure to amass great wealth.* I am prepared to believe that they have not the leisure for it. *They love study.* Whoever did not love his profession would be either mad or miserable. *They live in modest circumstances*; one has to be extremely well disposed toward them to credit them for it. *An industrious and moderate life, spent in silent retreat, devoted to reading and work, is surely not a voluptuous and a criminal life.* At least not in men's eyes: everything depends on the inside. A man may be constrained to lead such a life, and yet bave a very corrupt soul; besides, what does it matter whether he himself is virtuous and modest, if the work he does feeds the idleness and spoils the minds of his

fellow-citizens? *Although the conveniences of life are often the products of the Arts, Artists do not enjoy a greater share of them.* They hardly seem to me to be the kind of people who would deny themselves the conveniences of life; especially those who devote themselves to altogether useless and therefore very lucrative Arts, and are therefore in a better position to acquire whatever they desire. *They only work for the rich.* [51] The way things are going, I would not be surprised to see the rich work for them some day. *And it is the idle rich who profit from the fruits of their labor, and who abuse them.* Once again, I do not see that our Artists are such simple and modest folk; luxury cannot prevail among one order of Citizens without soon insinuating itself under various guises into all the others, and everywhere it causes the same ravages.

[52] Luxury corrupts everything; the rich who enjoy it, and the wretched who covet it. To wear lace ruffles, an embroidered coat, and carry an enameled snuffbox, cannot be said to be in itself evil. But it is a very great evil to put any stock by such trifles, to regard as happy the people that wears them, and to devote to being in a position to acquire such things the time and effort which every human being owes to nobler objects. I do not need to know the profession of the person absorbed in such pursuits in order to know what to think of him.

[53] I have omitted the fine portrait of the Learned which we are here offered, and I believe I can take credit for being so considerate. My Adversary is less indulgent: not only does he not grant me anything he can deny me; but, rather than condemn my thinking ill of our vain and false politeness, he prefers to justify hypocrisy. He asks me whether I would wish vice to show itself openly? Certainly I would. Confidence and esteem would be reborn among the good, men would learn to distrust the wicked, and society would be the more secure for it. I prefer to have my enemy attack me openly than treacherously to come and strike me from behind. What then! does scandal have to be tied to crime? I do not know; but I would prefer it if imposture did not have to be tied to it. Vicious people are perfectly comfortable with all these maxims about scandal that have been doled out to us for so long: if one were to adhere to them strictly, one would have to let oneself be robbed, betrayed, killed with impunity, and never punish anyone; for a knave on the rack is a most scandalous sight. But is not hypocrisy an homage vice

pays to virtue? Yes, like that of Caesar's assassins, who prostrated themselves at his feet the more securely to murder him. The thought may be brilliant, [52] the famous name of its Author may give it authority, it is nevertheless not right. Would a thief, dressed up in the livery of the house in order to do his mischief more easily, ever be said to be paying homage to the master of the house he robs? No, to cover one's wickedness with the dangerous mantle of hypocrisy is not to honor virtue; it is to offend it by profaning its standards; it is to add cowardice and imposture to all the other vices; it is to shut oneself off forever from any possible return to probity. There are lofty characters who bring even to crime something proud and generous which reveals that they still have left in them some spark of that celestial fire made to animate beautiful souls. But the vile and groveling soul of the hypocrite is like a corpse, without fire, or warmth, or vitality left. I appeal to experience. Great villains have been known to return into themselves, end their life wholesomely, and die saved. But no one has ever known a hypocrite becoming a good man; one might reasonably have tried to convert Cartouche, never would a wise man have undertaken to convert Cromwell.

[54] I have attributed the elegance and politeness of our manners to the restoration of the Letters and Arts; the Writer of the Answer takes issue with me on this point, and it surprises me that he does so: for since he puts so much stock by politeness and so much stock by the Sciences, I do not see what advantage he derives from denying to one the honor of having produced the other. But let us examine his proofs: they come down to this. *The Learned are not found to be more polite than other men: on the contrary, often they are less so; hence our politeness is not the work of the Sciences.*

[55] I should note, first of all, that it is not so much a question of the Sciences as it is one of Literature, the fine Arts, and works of taste; and our wits, as devoid of Learning as you please, but ever so polite, so worldly, so scintillating, so foppish, will have difficulty recognizing themselves in the sullen and pedantic air the Writer of the Reply attributes to them. But let us grant him this major premise; let us concede, if we must, that the Learned, the Poets, and the wits are all equally ridiculous; that the Gentlemen of the Academy of Letters, the Gentlemen of the Academy of [53] Sciences, and the Gentlemen of the French Academy, are crude folk, knowing

neither the tone, nor the ways of the world, and who are by their state excluded from good company; the Writer will not gain much from this concession, and it will not give him a better title to deny that the politeness and the urbanity that prevail among us are the effect of good taste, derived originally from the ancients and disseminated amongst the peoples of Europe by the agreeable Books published throughout the continent.* Just as the best dancing masters are not always those who show themselves to best advantage, so it is possible to give excellent lessons of politeness without being inclined or able to be polite oneself. The ponderous Commentators who, we are told, knew everything of the ancients save their grace and delicacy did, nevertheless, with their useful though despised works, teach us to be sensible of those beauties, although they were themselves insensitive to them. The same may be said regarding the agreeable manners and the elegance of morals which men substitute for purity of morals, and which have been in evidence among all peoples among whom Letters have been held in honor, in Athens, in Rome, in China, everywhere politeness of language and of manners has consistently been found to accompany not Learned men and Artists, but the Sciences and the fine Arts.

[56] The Writer next attacks my praise of ignorance: and while taxing me with having spoken more like an Orator than a Philosopher, he depicts ignorance in his turn; as might be suspected, he does not lend it pretty colors.

[57] I do not deny that he is right, but I do not believe [*54*] I am wrong. All that is required to reconcile us is a strict and true distinction.

* When such very general objects as the morals and the manners of a people are at issue, one has to be careful not always to focus too narrowly on particular examples. For if one did, one would never see the sources of things. To find out whether I am right to attribute politeness to the cultivation of Letters, one should not look for whether some Learned person or other is polite; rather, one should inquire into the possible relations between literature and politeness, and then see among which peoples these things are found together, and among which they are found separately. The same has to be done regarding luxury, freedom, and all the other things that influence the morals of a Nation and about which I daily hear so many paltry arguments: To examine all this narrowly and in some few individual cases is not to Philosophize, it is to waste one's time and reflections; for one can know Peter or James thoroughly, and yet have made very little progress in the knowledge of men

[58] There is a ferocious* and brutal ignorance, born of a wicked heart and a deceitful mind; a criminal ignorance of even the duties of humanity, which multiplies the vices, degrades reason, depraves the soul, and renders men similar to beasts: this is the ignorance which the Writer attacks and of which he paints a most odious and most faithful portrait. There is another, reasonable sort of ignorance, which consists in restricting one's curiosity to the scope of the faculties one has received; a modest ignorance, born of a lively love of virtue, and which inspires nothing but indifference toward all that is unworthy of occupying man's heart, and does not contribute to making him better; a gentle and precious ignorance, the treasure of a soul pure and satisfied with itself, that finds all its felicity in retreating into itself, in confirming itself in its innocence, and has no need to seek a false and vain happiness in the opinion others might have of its enlightenment: This is the ignorance I praised and which I ask Heaven to grant me in punishment for the scandal I caused to the learned by my open contempt for men's Sciences.

[59] *Compare*, says the Writer, *the times of ignorance and barbarism with the happy centuries when the Sciences everywhere disseminated a spirit of order and of justice.* Those happy centuries will be difficult to find; it will be easier to find centuries when, thanks to the Sciences, Order and Justice will be nothing but vain names used to impress the people, and when they will have been carefully preserved in appearance so that they might be destroyed with greater impunity in fact. *Nowadays wars are found to be less frequent but more just*; how, at any [55] time whatsoever, can war be more just on one side without being more unjust on the other? I cannot conceive of it! *Deeds less astounding but more heroic.* Certainly no one will challenge my Adversary's right to judge of heroism; but does he think that what he does not find astounding, is not so for us? *Victories less bloody but more glorious; Conquests less rapid but more certain;*

* I shall be greatly surprised if someone of my critics does not take my praise of several ignorant and virtuous peoples as the occasion to confront me with a list of all the bands of Brigands who have infested the earth, and who are not usually very Learned men. I urge them in advance not to trouble with such an inquiry, unless they think it necessary in order to show me their erudition. If I had said that in order to be virtuous it suffices to be ignorant it would not be worth bothering to answer me; and for the same reason, I shall consider myself free not to answer those who waste their time maintaining the contrary.

warriors less violent but more feared; able to achieve victory with moderation. treating the vanquished humanely; honor is their guide, glory their reward. I do not gainsay the Writer that there are great men among us; it would be too easy for him to provide proof of it; this does not prevent peoples from being deeply corrupted. Besides, all this is so vague that the same could almost be said of every age; and it is impossible to respond to it, because one would have to go through entire Libraries and write large tomes to prove either the affirmative or the negative.

[60] When Socrates dealt harshly with the Sciences he could not, it seems to me, have had reference either to the Stoics' pride, or to the Epicureans' effeminacy, or to the Pyrrhonists' absurd jargon, because none of these folk existed in his time. But this slight anachronism is not unbecoming to my Adversary: he has spent his life better than in checking dates, and is no more obliged to know his Diogenes Laertius by heart than I am to have seen at close range what happens in battles.

[61] I grant, then, that Socrates only intended to criticize the vices of the Philosophers of his own time; but I do not know what conclusion to draw from it, other than that even then vices abounded where there were Philosophers. In reply to which I am told that this is due to the abuse of Philosophy, and I do not think I said the contrary. What! are then all things that get abused to be eliminated? Yes indeed, I will unhesitatingly answer: all those that are useless; all those the abuse of which does more harm than their use does good.

[62] Let us briefly pause at this last conclusion, and let us beware of inferring from it that we should now burn all Libraries and destroy the Universities and the Academies. We would only plunge Europe back into Barbarism, and morals would gain [56] nothing from it.* It is with sorrow that I shall state a great and fatal truth. From knowledge to ignorance, it is but a single step; and Nations have frequently gone from one to the other; but never has a people, once corrupted, been known to return to virtue. You would in vain aspire to destroy the sources of the evil; in vain deprive vanity, idleness, and luxury of all sustenance; in vain even return men to

* We would be left the vices, says the Philosopher I have already mentioned, *and have ignorance besides.* The few lines this Author has written on this great subject show that he has turned his gaze in that direction, and has seen far.

their first equality, the preserver of innocence and the source of all virtue: their hearts, once spoiled, will be so forever; no remedy remains, short of some great revolution almost as much to be feared as the evil it might cure, and which it is blameworthy to desire and impossible to foresee.

[63] Let us therefore let the Sciences and the Arts in some measure temper the ferociousness of the men they have corrupted; let us strive wisely to divert them, and try to deceive their passions. Let us feed those Tigers something, to keep them from devouring our children. A wicked person's enlightenment is, on balance, less to be feared than is his brutal stupidity; at least it causes him to be more circumspect about the harm he might do, by acquainting him with the harm he himself would suffer as a result.

[64] I have praised Academies and their illustrious founders, and I am ready to do so again. When the sickness is incurable, the Physician administers palliatives and adapts his remedies less to the patient's needs than to his temperament. Wise legislators ought to imitate his prudence; and since, with sick Peoples, they can no longer adopt the most excellent polity, they should at least give them, as Solon did, the best they can tolerate.

[65] There is in Europe a great Prince and, what is far more, a virtuous Citizen, who recently founded several institutions in support of Letters in the fatherland he has adopted and makes happy. In doing so, he has done something eminently worthy of his wisdom and virtue. With respect to political establishments, time and [57] place are all-important. Princes must always favor the Sciences and Arts out of self-interest; I have said why: and in the present state of things, they must now also favor them even in the Peoples' interest. If there were currently among us a Monarch so foolish as to think and act differently, his subjects would stay poor and ignorant, and be no less vicious for it. My Adversary has failed to take advantage of an example so striking and apparently so favorable to his cause; perhaps he is the only person not to know, or to think of it. Let him therefore permit us to remind him of it; let him not deprive great objects of the praise due them; let him admire them as much as we do, and not think himself thereby strengthened against the truths which he attacks.

[*OC* III, 59]

Letter from J. J. Rousseau of Geneva to M. Grimm

About the refutation of his Discourse by M. Gautier Professor of Mathematics and of History and Member of the Royal Academy of Letters at Nancy

[1] I am returning, Sir, the October issue of the *Mercure* which you were good enough to loan me. I read in it with much pleasure the refutation of my Discourse which M. Gautier took the trouble to write; but I do not believe that I am, as you maintain, required to reply to it; and here are my reasons.

[2] 1. I cannot persuade myself that in order to be right, one invariably has to have the last word.

[3] 2. The more I reread the refutation, the more convinced I am that I need offer M. Gautier no other rejoinder than the very Discourse to which he replied. Read, if you please, in each of these writings the discussions of luxury, war, Academies, education; read the Prosopopeia of Louis the Great and that of Fabricius; finally, read M. Gautier's conclusion and mine, and you will understand what I mean.

[4] 3. I think so differently from M. Gautier in everything that, if I had to take up all the passages where our opinions differ, I would have to take issue with him even regarding the points I would have stated as he stated them, and that would give me an air of contrariness which I should rather like to be able to avoid. For example, in speaking of [60] politeness, he very clearly implies that in order to become a good man one does well to begin by being a hypocrite, and that falseness is an assured path to virtue. He further says that the vices adorned by politeness are not contagious, as they would be if they showed themselves boorishly head-on; that the art of seeing through men has made as much progress as the art of dissembling; that everyone is convinced that men cannot be counted on, unless one pleases or is useful to them; that everyone knows

what store to set by specious professions of politeness; which, I suppose, is to say, that when two men exchange compliments, and in his heart of hearts one of them says to the other: *I treat you like a fool, and don't give a hang about you*, the other answers him in his heart of hearts: *I know that you are lying shamelessly, but I fully reciprocate in kind*. If I had wished to resort to the bitterest irony, I might have said more or less as much.

[5] 4. It is evident from every page of the refutation that the Author does not understand or does not wish to understand the work he is refuting, which certainly makes it very convenient for him; for by constantly answering his own thought, and never mine, he has the best opportunity in the world to say anything he pleases. On the other hand, while this makes it more difficult for me to reply, it also makes it less necessary: for no one has ever claimed that a Painter who exhibits a picture in public has to examine the spectators' eyes, and provide glasses to everyone who needs them.

[6] Besides, it is by no means certain that even if I did reply, I would be understood; for example, I would tell M. Goutier that I know that our soldiers are not Réaumurs and Fontenelles, and that it is so much the worse for them, for us, and especially for the enemy. I know that they know nothing, that they are brutal and coarse, and nevertheless I did say, and I say again, that they have been enervated by the Sciences which they despise, and the fine Arts which they do not know. It is one of the great inconveniences of cultivating Letters that, for a few men they enlighten, they corrupt an entire nation at a pure loss. Now, you can readily see, Sir, that this would merely be another unintelligible paradox for M. Gautier; for the M. Gautier who proudly asks me what Troops have in common with Academies; whether soldiers will be braver for being ill clad and ill [*61*] fed; what I mean by maintaining that by dint of honoring talents, virtues suffer neglect; and other similar questions which show that it is impossible to answer them intelligibly to the satisfaction of the person who raises them. I believe you will agree that it is not worth the trouble to explain my position a second time if I am to be understood no better than the first.

[7] 5. If I wished to reply to the first part of the refutation, there would be no end to it. M. Gautier feels at liberty to tell me which Authors I may cite, and which I must reject. His choice is natural enough; he challenges the authority of those who testify on my

behalf, and wishes me to rely on those he believes to be against me. It would be in vain for me to try to make him understand that a single witness in my favor is conclusive, while a hundred witnesses prove nothing against my sentiment, because the witnesses are parties to the trial; in vain for me to request him to draw distinctions in the examples he adduces; in vain for me to point out to him that to be a barbarian is one thing, and to be criminal is another thing entirely, and that truly corrupted peoples are not so much peoples with bad Laws as those with contempt for the Laws; his rejoinder is easy to anticipate: How can one possibly trust shocking Writers, who dare to praise barbarians unable to read or write! How can people who go about altogether naked possibly be thought modest, and people who eat raw flesh virtuous? There will, then, have to be disputations. Here, then, are Herodotus, Strabo, Pomponius-Mela, grappling with Xenophon, Justin, Quintus Curtius, Tacitus; here we are, then, engaged in Critical studies, Antiquities, erudition. Pamphlets grow into Volumes, Books multiply, and the issue is forgotten: such is the fate of Literary disputations, that after Tomes of elucidation, one always ends up no longer knowing where one is: it is not worth starting in the first place.

[8] If I wished to reply to the second Part, it would soon be done; but I would not be telling anyone anything new. All M. Gautier does to refute me there is to say yes wherever I said no, and no wherever I said yes; so that I need only say no again wherever I had [*62*] said no, yes wherever I had said yes, and leave out the proofs, and I shall have answered punctiliously. By following M. Gautier's method, I can, then, not reply to the two Parts of the refutation without saying either too much or too little: yet I should like not to do either.

[9] 6. I could follow another method, and deal separately with M. Gautier's argument, and the style of his refutation.

[10] If I examined his arguments I could easily show that they are all beside the point, that the Writer failed to grasp the issue, and that he did not understand me.

[11] For example, M. Gautier takes the trouble to inform me that some peoples are vicious without being learned, and it had already occurred to me that the Kalmuks, the Bedouins, and the Kaffirs were not prodigies of virtue or of erudition. If M. Gautier had taken as much care to show me a single learned People that is

not vicious, he would have surprised me more. He constantly has me argue as if I had said that Science is the only source of corruption among men; if he sincerely believed that, I admire his being so good as to answer me at all.

[12] He says that experience of the world is all one needs to acquire the politeness a gentleman prides himself in possessing; from which he concludes that there is no basis for honoring the Sciences for it: but what will he, then, allow us to honor for it? As long as men have lived in society, some Peoples have been polite, and others have not. M. Gautier forgot to tell us the reason for this difference.

[13] M. Gautier everywhere expresses admiration for the purity of our present morals. His good opinion of them undoubtedly does great honor to his own; but it does not testify to much experience. To judge by how he speaks of them, he appears to have studied men the way the Peripatetics studied Physics, without leaving his closet. I, on the other hand, closed my Books; and after having listened to men talk, I watched them act. No wonder that, having followed such different methods, we agree so little in our conclusions. I quite see that men could not speak *[63]* with greater propriety than we nowadays do; and that is what strikes M. Gautier; but I also see that there could be no more corrupt morals, and that is what shocks me. Do we really believe we have become good men because, by dint of giving our vices decent names, we no longer blush at them?

[14] He further says that even if it could be proven by an appeal to facts that dissoluteness of morals has always reigned together with the Sciences, it would not follow that the fate of probity depends on their progress. After having devoted the first Part of my Discourse to proving that these things had always gone together, I devoted the second to showing that one was indeed dependent on the other. To whom, then, am I to imagine that M. Gautier is here trying to reply?

[15] He appears to me to be above all very much shocked by the way I spoke about College education. He tells me that in them young people are taught any number of fine things that might help amuse them when they are grown up, but I must admit that I do not see the connection between these things and the duties of Citizens, which they should be taught in the first place. "We readily

inquire 'does he know Greek and Latin? Does he write verse or prose?' But 'has he become better or more sensible,' which used to be the principal question, is no longer asked. Call out to our People about a Passer-by, *O, what a learned man!* and about another, *O, what a good man!* they will not fail to turn their eyes and respect toward the first. A third Caller is needed. *O, what blockheads!*"

[16] I said that Nature sought to preserve us from Science as a mother snatches a dangerous weapon from her child's hands, and that the difficulty we have in learning is not the least of its benefactions. M. Gautier would as soon have had me say: Peoples, recognize once and for all that Nature does not wish you to get your sustenance from the earth's productions; the difficulties with which it has surrounded the cultivation of the earth are a warning to you to let it lie fallow. M. Gautier has not given thought to the fact that with a little work one is certain to make bread; but that with much study it is very doubtful that one succeeds in making a reasonable man. He has also not given thought to the fact that this is but one [64] more observation in my favor; for, why has Nature imposed necessary labors on us, if it is not to turn us away from useless occupations? But by the contempt he shows for agriculture, it is easy to see that, if it were up to himself alone, all Husbandmen would soon abandon the Countryside in order to go argue in the Schools, an occupation which, according to M. Gautier and, I believe, a good many Professors, is most important for the State's happiness.

[17] In thinking about a passage in Plato, I had concluded that perhaps the ancient Egyptians did not hold the Sciences in quite as high esteem as might have been believed. The Author of the refutation asks me how this opinion can be reconciled with the inscription Ozymandias had placed on his Library. That might have been a good question to raise during the Prince's lifetime. Now that he is dead, I, in turn, ask, what need there is to look for agreement between King Ozymandias's sentiment and that of Egypt's Wise men? Who can say confidently that if he had counted, and especially if he had weighed opinions, the word *poisons* would not have been substituted for the word *remedies*? But let us leave be this ostentatious Inscription. Such remedies are excellent, I grant it, and I have already repeated it quite a number of times; but is that a reason for administering them indiscriminately and without regard to the

sick persons' temperament? A given food may be very good in itself, and only cause indigestion and ill-humors in a weak stomach. What would people say about a Physician who, after speaking well of some hearty meats, concluded that all sick people should gorge on them?

[18] I showed that the Sciences and the Arts enervate courage. M. Gautier calls that an odd way to argue, and does not see the connection between courage and virtue. Yet it is not, it seems to me, particularly difficult to understand. Once a man has grown accustomed to prefer his life to his duty, he will soon also prefer to it the things that make life easy and agreeable.

[19] I said that Science suits a few great geniuses; but that it is always harmful to the Peoples that cultivate it. M. Gautier says that Socrates and Cato, who censured the Sciences, were nevertheless themselves [65] very learned Men: and he calls that refuting me.

[20] I said that Socrates was the most learned of the Athenians, and that is why I regard his testimony authoritative: none of which prevents M. Gautier from informing me that Socrates was learned.

[21] He blames me for having maintained that Cato despised the Greek Philosophers; and he does so on the grounds that Carneades made a game of upholding the refutation of the very same propositions, which unjustifiably prejudiced Cato against the Writings of the Greeks. M. Gautier should really tell us this Carneades's country and profession.

[22] No doubt Carneades is the only Philosopher or Scholar to have prided himself on upholding both the *pro* and the *con*; otherwise everything M. Gautier says here would be entirely irrelevant. I rely on his erudition in this matter.

[23] What the refutation lacks in good arguments it amply makes up for in fine declamations. The Author everywhere substitutes artful embellishments for the solid proofs he had initially promised; and he lavishes oratorical pomp on a Refutation in which he reproves me for having used it in an Academy Discourse.

[24] *To what end, then,* says M. Gautier, *do M. Rousseau's eloquent declamations tend?* To abolish, if possible, the vain declamations of Colleges. *Who would not be indignant at hearing him assert that we have the appearance of all the virtues without possessing a single one.* I admit that there is some flattery in saying that we have the appearance of the virtues; but M. Gautier, more than anyone else, should have forgiven me that one. *Well! Why is there no more virtue? Because*

Letters, the Sciences, and the Arts are cultivated. For that very reason. *If one were impolite, rustic, ignorant, Goths, Huns, or Vandals, one would be worthy of M. Rousseau's praise.* Why not? Is any one of those names incompatible with virtue? *Will one never weary of inveighing against men?* Will they never weary of being wicked? *Will one keep on believing that they are made more virtuous by being told that they are without virtue?* Will one believe that they are made better, by convincing them that they are good enough? *On the pretext of purifying morals, may one knock down their props?* On the pretext of enlightening minds, [66] may souls be perverted? *O sweet bonds of society! amiable virtues, the charm of true Philosophers; it is by your inherent attractiveness that you rule in men's hearts; you owe your sway neither to stoic sternness, nor to barbarous uproars, nor to the counsels of a prideful rusticity.*

[25] I note, first, something rather amusing; that [of] all the Sects of the ancient Philosophers which I attacked as being useless to virtue, the Stoics are the only ones M. Gautier grants me, and he even seems to want to put them in my camp. He is right; I will not be any the prouder for it.

[26] But let us see whether I cannot convey the exact meaning of this exclamation in different terms: *O amiable virtues! it is by your inherent attractiveness that you rule in men's souls. You have no need of all the elaborate trappings of ignorance and rusticity. You go to the heart by simpler and more natural paths. One need only know Rhetoric, Logic, Physics, Metaphysics, and Mathematics to acquire the right to possess you.*

[27] Another example of M. Gautier's style:

[28] *You know that the Sciences taught to young Philosophers in the Universities are Logic, Metaphysics, Ethics, Physics, and elementary Mathematics.* If I did know, I forgot it, as we all do on reaching the age of reason. *According to you, then, these are barren speculations!* barren according to the common opinion; but according to me, most fertile in bad things. *The Universities are much obliged to you for informing them that the truth of these sciences has withdrawn to the bottom of a well.* I do not believe I informed anyone of it. I did not coin the phrase; it is as old as Philosophy. Besides, I know that the Universities owe me no gratitude; and when I took up my pen, I was not unaware of the fact that I could not at one and the same time court men,

and honor the truth. *The great Philosophers who possess them to an eminent degree are doubtless rather surprised to learn that they know nothing.* I believe that these great Philosophers who possess all these great sciences to an eminent degree would, indeed, be very surprised to learn that they know nothing. But I, myself, would be even more surprised if these men, who know so many things, ever knew this. [67]

[29] I notice that M. Gautier, who, throughout, treats me with the utmost politeness, does not miss a single opportunity to make me enemies; his attentions on this score range all the way from the College Regents to the sovereign power. M. Gautier does well to justify the ways of the world; he is clearly not a stranger to them. But let us return to the refutation.

[30] All these ways of writing and of reasoning, which do not at all become a man as intelligent as M. Gautier appears to me to be, have led me to frame a conjecture which you will find bold, yet I believe reasonable. He accuses me, surely without himself believing it, of not being persuaded of the sentiments I uphold. I, on the other hand, on better grounds, suspect him of secretly agreeing with me. The posts he occupies, the circumstances in which he finds himself, must have placed him under a kind of necessity to come out against me. Our century's propriety has many uses; he will, then, have refuted me out of propriety; but he will have taken all manner of precautions, and been as artful as possible to do so in a way that will not persuade anyone.

[31] It is with this end in view that he begins by announcing quite irrelevantly that the cause he defends has a direct bearing on the happiness of the assembly before which he speaks, and on the glory of the great Prince under whose laws he has the pleasure to live. This is as much as to say: you cannot avoid deciding in my favor, Gentlemen, without showing ingratitude toward your respectable Protector; moreover, I am today pleading your own cause before you; so that from whatever angle you examine my arguments, I have the right to expect you not to prove difficult about their soundness. I say that any man who speaks this way is more concerned with shutting people's mouths than he is interested in convincing them.

[32] If you read the refutation attentively, you will hardly find a single line in it that does not seem to be there awaiting and

indicating the answer. One example will suffice to make myself understood.

[33] *The victories of the Athenians over the Persians and even the Lacedaemonians show that the Arts can be combined with military virtue.* I ask whether that is not a ruse designed to recall what I said about the [*68*] defeat of Xerxes, and to call my attention to the outcome of the Peloponnesian War. *Their government, having become venal under Pericles, assumes a new complexion; the love of pleasure stifles their bravery, the most honorable offices are debased, impunity makes for a growing number of bad Citizens, the funds intended for the war are used to feed effeminacy and idleness; what relation is there between all these causes of corruption and the Sciences?*

[34] What is M. Gautier doing here if not recalling the entire second Part of my Discourse where I showed this relation? Note how artfully he presents the effects of corruption as its causes, in order to lead any sensible person to look for the first cause of these supposed causes on his own. Note, further, how, in order to let the Reader make that reflection himself, he pretends not to know what he cannot, in fact, be assumed not to know, and what all Historians unanimously maintain, that the corruption of the Athenians' morals and of their government was due to the Orators. It is therefore obvious that to attack me in this way is very clearly to indicate to me the answers I am supposed to give.

[35] Still, this is merely a conjecture which I do not claim I can confirm. M. Gautier might perhaps not approve of my wishing to vindicate his knowledge at the expense of his good faith: but if, in refuting my Discourse, he did indeed speak sincerely, why was M. Gautier, Professor of History, Professor of Mathematics, Member of the Academy of Nancy, not a little wary of all the titles he has?

[36] I will therefore not reply to M. Gautier; that is a settled issue. I could never answer seriously, and take up the refutation point by point; you can see why; and to resort to *ridiculum acri*, irony and bitter jest, would be a poor acknowledgment of the praise with which M. Gautier honors me. I am rather afraid that he may already have too much cause to complain of the tone of this Letter: at least he knew, when he wrote his refutation, that he was attacking a man who does not set enough stock by politeness to wish to learn from it how to disguise his sentiment.

[37] Besides, I am ready to do M. Gautier all the justice due him. His Work seems to me that of a gifted man who has a good deal of knowledge. [*69*] Others will perhaps find Philosophy in it; as for myself, I find in it much erudition.

I am wholeheartedly, Sir, etc.

[38] P.S. I have just read in the Utrecht Gazette of 22 October a pompous account of M. Gautier's Work, and this account seems deliberately designed to confirm my suspicions. An Author who is at all confident of the value of his Work lets others praise it, and himself does no more than to prepare a good Summary of it. The Summary of the refutation is done so skillfully that, although it deals solely with trivialities which I had simply used as transitions, there is not one about which a judicious Reader can be of M. Gautier's opinion.

[39] It is not true, according to him, that History is primarily interesting owing to men's vices.

[40] I might set aside the proofs based on reasoning; and in order to meet M. Gautier on his own ground, I will refer him to authorities.

[41] *Happy the Peoples whose Kings have caused little stir in History.*

[42] *If ever men became wise, their history will scarcely be entertaining.*

[43] M. Gautier rightly says that even a society made up entirely of just men could not endure without Laws; and from this he concludes that it is not true that, were it not for men's injustices, Jurisprudence would be useless. Would so learned a Writer confuse Jurisprudence and the Laws?

[44] I might, once again, set aside proofs based on reasoning; and, in order to meet M. Gautier on his own ground, refer him to facts.

[45] The Lacedaemonians had neither Jurisconsults nor lawyers; their Laws were not even committed to writing; yet they had Laws. I leave it to M. Gautier's erudition to tell me whether the Laws were less well observed in Lacedaemon than in the Countries teeming with Men of Law.

[46] I will not take up every one of the minutiae to which M. Gautier refers, and upon which he expatiates in the Gazette; instead I will close by submitting the following observation to your scrutiny. [*70*]

[47] Let us concede everything to M. Gautier, and remove from my Discourse all the things he attacks, my proofs will have lost almost nothing of their force. Let us remove from M. Gautier's text everything that does not bear on the heart of the matter: nothing whatever will be left of it.

[48] I conclude once again that M. Gautier should not be answered.

Paris, 1 November 1751.

[*OC* III, *71*]

Last Reply By J.-J. Rousseau of Geneva

Let us appear to remain silent not out of shame but out of discretion.
Cyprian, Contra Demet[rianum]

[1] It is with the utmost reluctance that I entertain with my disputations idle Readers who care very little for the truth: but it has just been attacked in a way that forces me once again to take up its defense, lest the many mistake my silence for a concession, or the Philosophers mistake it for indifference.

[2] I have to repeat myself; I realize it, and the public will not forgive me for it. But the wise will say: This man does not constantly have to look for new arguments; which is one proof of how sound his arguments are.* [72]

[3] Since those who attack me never fail to stray from the issue and to eliminate the essential distinctions I had introduced, I always have to begin by reintroducing them. Here, then, is a summary of the propositions I upheld and will continue to uphold as long as I shall heed no other interest than that of truth.

[4] The Sciences are the masterpiece of genius and of reason. The spirit of imitation has produced the fine Arts, and experience

* Some very solid truths appear absurd at first glance, and to the great majority they will always appear to be so. Go tell a man of the People that the sun is closer to us in winter than in summer or that it has set before we cease to see it, and he will laugh at you. The same is true of the sentiment I uphold. The most superficial men have always been readiest to side against me; the true Philosophers are not so hasty, and if I have the glory of having made a few converts, it is only among the latter. Before stating my views, I had meditated on the subject long and thoroughly, and had tried to consider it in all of its aspects. I doubt that any one of my adversaries can say as much. At least I do not find in their writings any of those luminous truths [72] that are no less striking by their evidence than by their novelty, and are always the fruit as well as the proof of adequate meditation. I dare say that they have never raised against me a single reasonable objection which I had not foreseen and answered in advance. That is why I have no choice but constantly to repeat the same things.

has perfected them. We are indebted to the mechanical arts for a great many useful inventions that have added to the charms and comforts of life. These are truths which I certainly grant most wholeheartedly. But let us now consider these various kinds of knowledge in their relation to morals.*

[5] If celestial intelligences cultivated the sciences, only good would come of it; I say as much about the great men made to guide others. Socrates, learned and virtuous, did mankind honor; but the vices of vulgar men poison the most [73] sublime knowledge and render it pernicious to the Nations; the wicked derive much that is harmful from it; the good derive little benefit from it. If none but Socrates had laid claim to Philosophy in Athens, the blood of a just man would not have cried out for vengeance against the fatherland of the Sciences and the Arts.*

[6] The question of whether it would be advantageous for men to have science bears examination, even assuming that what they call by that name does indeed deserve it: but it is folly to pretend that the chimeras of Philosophy, the errors and the lies of the Philosophers can be good for anything. Shall we forever be deceived

* *Knowledge makes men gentle*, says the famous Philosopher whose always profound and sometimes sublime work everywhere breathes the love of humanity. With these few words he has written and, what is exceptional, he has done so without bombast, the most solid thing ever written on behalf of Letters. True, knowledge makes men gentle. But gentleness, the most amiable of virtues, is also sometimes a weakness of the soul. Virtue is not always gentle; when the occasion requires, it can arm itself with due severity against vice, be fired with indignation against crime.

And the just cannot pardon the wicked

A King of Lacedaemon replied most wisely to those who in his presence praised the extreme goodness of his Colleague Charilaus *How can he be good, he told them, if he cannot be terrible to the wicked?* Brutus was not a gentle man; who would be so bold as to say that he was not virtuous? By contrast, there are cowardly and pusillanimous souls that have neither fire nor warmth, and are only gentle out of indifference for good and evil. This is the gentleness which the taste for Letters instills in Peoples.

* It cost Socrates his life to have said exactly the same things I am saying. In the trial against him one of his accusers brought charges on behalf of the Artists, another on behalf of the Orators, the third on behalf of the Poets, all of them on behalf of the supposed cause of the Gods. The Poets, the Artists, the Fanatics, the Rhetoricians triumphed; and Socrates perished. I am rather afraid that I did my century too much honor when I asserted that Socrates would not have had to drink the Hemlock now.

by words? and shall we never understand that studies, knowledge, learning and Philosophy are but empty shams conjured up by men's pride and altogether unworthy of the pompous names which it gives them?

[7] As the taste for such foolishness spreads in a nation, it loses its taste for the solid virtues: for it takes less to achieve distinction by chatter than by good morals, once one is exempted from being a good man provided one is an agreeable man.

[8] The more the inside becomes corrupt, the more composed does the outside become:* that is how the cultivation of Letters insensibly engenders politeness. Taste springs from the same source, as well. Since public approval is the first reward of literary labors, it is natural that those who [74] pursue such labors should reflect on the means to please; and these reflections eventually shape style, purify taste, and disseminate graciousness and urbanity everywhere. All these things may, perhaps, be regarded as supplements to virtue: but they can never be said to be virtue, and they will rarely be combined with it. There will always be this difference, that he who makes himself useful works for others, whereas he who seeks only to make himself agreeable works solely for himself. For example, the flatterer spares no effort in order to please, and yet he does only harm.

[9] Vanity and idleness, which have given rise to our sciences, have also given rise to luxury. A taste for luxury always accompanies a taste for Letters, and a taste for Letters often accompanies a taste for luxury;* all these things keep each other company fairly faithfully, because they are products of the same vices.

* I never attend a performance of one of Molière's Plays without admiring the spectators' delicacy. A single somewhat free word, a single expression that is not so much obscene as crude, everything offends their chaste ears; and I do not doubt that the most corrupt are always the most shocked. Yet does anyone believe that if the morals of Molière's century were compared with those of our own, the result would be to the credit of ours? Once the imagination is sullied, it turns everything into an object for scandal; once nothing but one's exterior remains good, one takes twice as much care to preserve it.

* Someone somewhere has cited in opposition to me the luxury of the Asiatics, arguing the same way as leads people to cite the vices of ignorant peoples in opposition to me. But, by a misfortune that keeps pursuing my adversaries, they are mistaken even about facts that prove nothing against me. I know perfectly well that the peoples of the Orient are no less ignorant than ourselves; but that does not keep them from being as vain as we are and turning out almost as many books as we do. The Turks, who of all of them cultivate Letters least, had as

[10] If experience should not conform to these demonstrated propositions, one would have to look for the specific causes of this disagreement. But the first idea of these propositions was itself born of a long meditation on experience; and in order to see how fully experience confirms them, one need only consult the annals of the world.

[11] The first men were exceedingly ignorant. How could one dare maintain that they were corrupted, at a time when the sources of corruption were not yet open?

[12] Through the obscurity [that surrounds] ancient times and the rusticity of ancient Peoples, one discerns in a number of them very considerable virtues, especially a severity of morals that is the unmistakable mark of their purity, good faith, hospitality, justice and, most important, [75] a great horror of debauchery,* that teeming lap of all the other vices. Virtue is, then, not incompatible with ignorance.

many as five hundred and eighty classical poets of their own by the middle of the last century.

* I have no intention of courting the favor of women; I accept their honoring me with the epithet Pedant which is so dreaded by all our gallant Philosophers. I am crude, sullen, impolite on principle, and I want no one to fawn on me; so I will speak the truth quite unhampered.

Man and woman are made to love one another and to unite; but beyond this legitimate union all amorous dealings between them are a dreadful source of disorders in society and in morals. Certain it is that women alone could restore honor and probity among us: but they spurn from the hands of virtue an empire which they wish to owe solely to their charms; thus they do only harm, and often themselves suffer the punishment for this preference. It is difficult to understand how, in so pure a Religion, chastity could have become a base and monastic virtue capable of rendering ridiculous any man and I am almost inclined to say any woman who might dare to claim it; whereas amongst the Pagans this same virtue was universally honored, regarded as becoming to great men, and admired in their most illustrious heroes. I can cite three of them who yield to none, and who, quite independently of Religion, all gave memorable examples of continence: Cyrus, Alexander, and the younger Scipio. Of all the rare objects in the King's Collections, the only one I should like to see is the silver shield given to Scipio by the Peoples of Spain and on which they had etched the triumph of his virtue: this is how it was meet for the Romans to subdue other Peoples, as much by the respect owed to their morals as by the effort of their arms; this is how the city of the Falises was conquered, and Pyrrhus, though victorious, driven from Italy.

I recall having read somewhere a rather good rejoinder by the Poet Dryden to a young English Lord, who was criticizing him because, in one of his Tragedies, Cleomenes spent his time in intimate conversation with his beloved instead of contriving some scheme worthy of his love. When I am with a fair lady, the young Lord said to him, I put my time to better use: I believe it, Dryden replied, but then you will surely allow that you are no Hero.

[13] Nor is it always its companion: for a number of very ignorant peoples were very vicious. Ignorance is an obstacle neither to good nor to evil; it is merely man's natural state.*[76]

[14] The same cannot be said of science. All learned Peoples have been corrupt, and this is already a terrible presumption against it. But since comparisons between one People and another are difficult, since a great many factors have to be taken into account in making such comparisons, and since they are always in some respect imprecise, one is far better off tracing the history of one and the same People, and comparing its progress in knowledge with the revolutions in its morals. Now, the result of this inquiry is that the fair time, the time of virtue for every People, was the time of its ignorance; and that in proportion as it became learned, Artistic and Philosophic, it lost its morals and its probity; it reverted in this respect to the rank of the ignorant and vicious Nations that are the shame of mankind. If one nevertheless insists on looking for differences between them, I can discern one, and it is this: that all barbarous Peoples, even those that are without virtue, nevertheless always honor virtue, whereas learned and Philosophic Peoples by dint of progress eventually succeed in turning virtue into an object of derision and despising it. Once a nation has reached this point, it can be said that corruption is at its zenith and there is no more hope of remedies.

[15] This is the summary of what I advanced and I believe I proved. Let us now look at the summary of the Doctrine urged against me.

[16] "Men are naturally wicked; they were so prior to the formation of societies; and wherever the sciences did not carry their torch, Peoples, abandoned to *the faculties of instinct* alone reduced to a purely animal existence together with lions and bears, remained immersed in barbarism and misery.

[17] "In ancient times, Greece alone thought, and *by means of the mind* raised itself to all that can make a People [77] worthy of praise. Philosophers formed its morals and gave it laws.

* I cannot help laughing when I see I know not how many perfectly learned men, who honor me with their criticism, forever opposing to me the vices of a host of ignorant Peoples, as [76] if this had any bearing on the issue. From the fact that science necessarily gives rise to vice, does it follow that ignorance necessarily gives rise to virtue? Such ways of arguing may suit Rhetoricians or the children who

[18] "Sparta, it is true, was poor and ignorant by institution as well as by choice; but its laws had great defects, and its Citizens a strong tendency to let themselves be corrupted; its glory was insubstantial, and it soon lost its institutions, its laws and its morals.

[19] "Athens and Rome also degenerated. The first yielded to Macedonia's [rising] fortune; the other collapsed under its own greatness, because the laws of a small city were not suited to the government of the world. If sometimes the glory of great Empires did not long survive their literary glory, the reason is that the glory of these Empires had reached its zenith by the time letters came to be cultivated in them, and that it is the fate of human things not to endure long in the same state. By thus granting that a change in laws and morals influenced these great events, one is not forced to concede that the Sciences and Arts contributed to them: and it can be seen that, on the contrary, the progress and decay of letters is always directly proportional to the fortune and decline of Empires.

[20] "This truth is confirmed by the experience of recent times where, in a vast and powerful Monarchy, the prosperity of the state, the cultivation of the Sciences and Arts, and of military virtue, can all be seen to contribute to the glory and grandeur of the Empire.

[21] "Our morals are the best men can have; a number of vices have been banished from among us; those we have left belong to humanity, and the sciences have no share in them.

[22] "Luxury has nothing to do with them either; hence the disorders which it may occasion must not be attributed to them. Besides, luxury is necessary in large States; it does them more good than harm: it serves to keep idle Citizens busy and to provide bread for the poor.

[23] "Politeness ought to be reckoned among the virtues rather than among the vices: it keeps men from showing themselves for what they are; a most necessary precaution if they are to find one another tolerable.

[24] "The Sciences have rarely attained the goal they [*78*] set themselves; but at least they aim at it. Progress in the knowledge of truth proceeds by slow steps; which is not to say that no progress is made in it.

have been made to refute me in my country; but Philosophers must reason differently.

[25] "Finally, even if it were true that the Sciences and Arts weaken courage, would not the endless goods which they do provide for us still be preferable to the barbarous and fierce virtue which causes humanity to tremble?" I omit the useless and pompous inventory of these goods: and to begin on this last point with an acknowledgment that should prevent much verbiage, I declare once and for all that, if anything can make up for ruined morals, I am prepared to grant that the Sciences do more good than harm. Let us now proceed to the rest.

[26] I could without much risk assume all this to have been proven, because very few of all these many, boldly propounded assertions go to the heart of the matter, fewer still allow of a single valid conclusion at odds with my sentiment, and most of them would even provide me with fresh arguments in my favor, if my cause needed them.

[27] Indeed, 1. If men are by nature wicked, then it is, admittedly, possible that some good might happen to come of the sciences at their hands; but it is perfectly certain that they will lead to far more harm: Madmen should not be given weapons.

[28] 2. If the sciences rarely achieve their goal, much more time will invariably be wasted than well spent. And even if it were true that we have discovered the best methods, the greater part of our labors would still be just as ridiculous as those of a man who, because he is confident of being able to work exactly to a plumb line, tried to dig a well all the way to the center of the earth.

[29] 3. We should not be made to feel so frightened of a purely animal life, nor to regard it as the worst state we might lapse into; for it is still better to resemble a sheep than an evil Angel.

[30] 4. Greece owed its morals and its laws to Philosophers, and to Legislators. I quite agree, I have said a hundred times over that it is good that there be Philosophers, provided the People do not pretend to be Philosophers.

[31] 5. Since no one dares to maintain that Sparta did not have good [79] laws, her laws are criticized for having been badly flawed: so that, in order to rebut my charge that learned Peoples have always been corrupt, ignorant Peoples are blamed for not having reached perfection.

[32] 6. The progress of letters is always directly proportioned to the greatness of Empires. So be it. I note that I am forever being

told about fortune and greatness. I, for my part, was talking about morals and virtue.

[33] 7. Our morals are the best that wicked men like ourselves can have; that may be so. We have banished a number of vices; I do not deny it. I do not accuse the men of this century of having all the vices; they only have those of cowardly souls; they are only rogues and knaves. As for the vices requiring courage and fortitude, I believe they are incapable of them.

[34] 8. Luxury may be needed to provide bread for the poor: but if there were no luxury, there would be no poor.* It keeps idle Citizens busy. And why are there idle Citizens? When agriculture was held in honor there was neither misery nor idleness, and there were far fewer vices.

[35] 9. I see that while they take this issue of luxury very much to heart, they maintain the pretense of dealing with it independently of the Sciences and Arts. I will grant, then, since they insist on it so categorically, that luxury supports States as Caryatids support the palaces they adorn: or rather, as do the [*80*] beams used to prop up rotting buildings, and which often only succeed in toppling them. Wise and prudent men, abandon any house that is being propped up.

[36] This may indicate how easily I could turn to my advantage most of what is urged against me: but, frankly speaking, I find none of it sufficiently well established to venture taking advantage of it.

[37] It is said that the first men were wicked; whence it follows that man is naturally wicked.* This is an assertion of no mean

* For every hundred paupers whom luxury feeds in our cities, it causes a hundred thousand to perish in our countryside: the money that passes between the hands of the rich and the Artists to provide for their superfluities is lost for the Husbandman's subsistence; and he is without a suit of clothing precisely because they have to have piping. The waste of stuff that can be used to feed men is alone enough to make luxury abhorrent to mankind. My adversaries are fortunate that the culpable delicacy of our language prevents me from going into details on this score which would make them blush at the cause they dare to defend. Our dishes require gravies, that is why so many sick people lack broth. We have to have liquors on our tables; that is why the peasant drinks only water. We have to have powder for our wigs; that is why so many poor people have no bread.

* This note is for Philosophers; I advise others to ignore it.

If man is by his nature wicked, it is clear that the Sciences will only make him worse; so that their cause is lost on this assumption alone. But note well that, although man is naturally good, as I believe, and as I have the good fortune to feel, it does not therefore follow that the sciences benefit him; for all circumstances

importance: it seems to me that it would have been well worth the trouble to prove it. The Annals of all the peoples they dare to cite in proof lend far more support to the contrary assumption; and it would take a great many testimonies to make me believe an absurdity. Before those dreadful words *thine* and *mine* were invented; before there was the cruel and brutal species of men called masters, and that other knavish and lying species of men called slaves; before there were men so abominable as to dare to have superfluities while other men die of hunger; before mutual dependence had forced all of them to become deceitful, jealous, and treacherous; I should like to have it explained to me wherein those vices, those crimes with which they are so insistently being blamed, could have consisted. I am told that men have long since been disabused of the chimera of the Golden Age. Why not also add that they have long since been disabused of the chimera of virtue?

[38] I said that the first Greeks were virtuous before science corrupted them; and I do not wish [*81*] to retract on this point, although, on looking at it more closely, I am not without some misgivings about the solidity of such a chatty people's virtues, or about the justice of the praise they so loved to lavish on themselves and which I do not find confirmed by any other testimony. What is brought up against me in this connection? That the first Greeks whose virtue I praised were enlightened and learned, since Philosophers formed their morals and gave them laws. But with this way of arguing, who is to keep me from saying as much about all other Nations? Did not the Persians have their Magi, the Assyrians their Chaldeans, the Indians their Gymnosophists, the Celts their Druids? Did not Ochus shine among the Phoenicians, Atlas among the Libyans, Zoroaster among the Persians, Zamolxis among the Thracians? Have not some even claimed that Philosophy was born among the Barbarians? Were all these peoples scholars, then, on this account? *Alongside of such men as Miltiades and Themistocles, could be found*, I am told, *such men as Aristides and Socrates.* Alongside of them, if you wish; for what does it matter to me? Still, Miltiades, Aristides, Themistocles, who were Heroes, lived in one

that lead a people to cultivate them necessarily announce a beginning of corruption which they then rapidly accelerate. After this, the vice of the constitution does all the harm which that of nature might have done, and bad prejudices play the part of bad inclinations.

age, Socrates and Plato, who were Philosophers, lived in another; and by the time public schools of Philosophy were first opened, a degraded and decadent Greece had already forsaken its virtue and sold its freedom.

[39] *Proud Asia saw its numberless armies shattered by a handful of men led to glory by Philosophy.* It is true: Philosophy of the soul leads to true glory, but that Philosophy is not learned in books. *Such is invariably the effect of knowledge of the mind.* I ask the Reader to make a note of this conclusion. *Morals and laws are the only sources of true heroism.* The Sciences have nothing to do with it, then. *In a word, Greece owed everything to the Sciences, and the rest of the world owed everything to Greece.* Greece and the world owed nothing to the laws or to morals, then. I beg my adversaries' pardon for it; but it is simply not possible to allow them such sophisms.

[40] Let us take a moment longer to examine this preference for Greece above all other peoples, and which seems to have become a point of major importance. *I will, if you wish, admire peoples that spend their lives at war or in the woods, sleep on the ground and live off vegetation.* Such admiration is indeed most worthy of a true [*82*] Philosopher: only a blind and stupid people admires those who spend their life not in defending their freedom, but in robbing and betraying one another in order to gratify their self-indulgence or their ambition, and who dare feed their idleness with the sweat, the blood and the toil of a million wretches. *But is it among these crude people that one would look for happiness?* It would be much more reasonable to look for it among them, than to look for virtue among the others. *What would Mankind look like if it were made up exclusively of husbandmen, soldiers, hunters, and shepherds?* It would look infinitely more beautiful than a Mankind made up of Cooks, Poets, Printers, Silversmiths, Painters, and Musicians. Only the word *soldier* should be erased from the first picture. War is sometimes a duty, and it is not made to be a trade. Every man should be a soldier in the defense of his freedom; none to invade that of another: and to die in the service of the fatherland is too noble an enterprise to entrust it to mercenaries. *Must we live like lions and bears, then, if we are to be worthy of being called men?* If I have the good fortune to find a single Reader who is impartial and a friend of the truth, I beg him to cast a glance at present society, and to see who, in it, are the ones who live together like lions and bears, tigers and croco-

diles. *Are the faculties of the instinct to feed, to perpetuate and to defend ourselves to be erected as virtues?* They are virtues, let us be in no doubt about it, when they are guided by reason and managed wisely; and, above all, they are virtues when they are used to help our fellows. *I see in them nothing but animal virtues, scarcely consistent with the dignity of our being. The body is active, but the slavish soul merely creeps and languishes.* I would be ready to say, on perusing the pretentious research in all our Academies: "I see in them nothing but ingenious subtleties, scarcely consistent with the dignity of our being. The mind is active, but the slavish soul merely creeps and languishes." *Take away the arts from the world*, we are told elsewhere, *what is left? Bodily activities and the passions.* Notice, please, note how reason and virtue are always forgotten! *The Arts have brought into being the pleasures of the soul, the only ones that are worthy of us.* Which is to say that they have substituted other pleasures for that of acting well, which is far worthier of [*83*] us still. Attend to the spirit of all this, and you will see in it, as you will see in the arguments of most of my adversaries, such a pronounced enthusiasm for the wonders of the understanding that this other faculty, which is so infinitely more sublime and more capable of elevating and ennobling the soul, is never taken into account. Such is the invariable and certain effect of cultivating letters. I am sure that there is not, at present, a single scholar who does not hold Cicero's eloquence in much higher esteem than his zeal, and who would not infinitely prefer to have written the *Catiline Orations* than to have saved his country.

[41] My adversaries' discomfiture is evident whenever they have to speak about Sparta. What would they not give for this fatal Sparta never to have existed? and how dearly would those who contend that great deeds are good for nothing but to be celebrated wish that Sparta's great deeds had never been celebrated! It is really dreadful that at the very center of that famous Greece which owed its virtue solely to Philosophy, the State where virtue was purest and lasted longest, should have been the very State where there were no Philosophers. Sparta's morals were always held up as a model to the whole of Greece; the whole of Greece had become corrupted, and there was still virtue in Sparta; the whole of Greece was enslaved, Sparta alone was still free: that is distressing. But finally proud Sparta lost its morals and its freedom, as learned

Athens had lost them; Sparta came to an end. What can I reply to that?

[42] Two further observations about Sparta, and I go on to other things; here is the first. *After having several times been on the verge of victory, Athens was defeated, it is true; and it is surprising that she was not defeated sooner, since Attica was entirely open country, and could defend herself only by overwhelming successes.* Athens should have been victorious for all kinds of reasons. It was larger and much more populous than Lacedaemon; it enjoyed large revenues, and several peoples paid it tribute; none of this was true of Sparta. Athens, mainly because of its location, enjoyed an advantage which Sparta lacked, which enabled it several times to devastate the Peloponnese, and which alone should have assured its Empire over Greece. It had a large and convenient harbor; it had a formidable Navy for which it was indebted to the foresight of that [*84*] boor Themistocles who did not know how to play the flute. One might therefore be surprised that Athens, with so many advantages, nevertheless finally succumbed. But although the Peloponnesian war, which ruined Greece, did not redound to the honor of either Republic, and although it represented, especially on the Lacedaemonians' part, a violation of the maxims of their wise Lawgiver, it is not surprising that eventually true courage prevailed over [material] resources, nor even that Sparta's reputation secured it some [resources] which made its victory easier. Truly, I am rather ashamed to know these things, and to be forced to say them.

[43] The other observation will be no less striking. Here is the text, which I believe I should again place before the Reader's eyes.

[44] *Let me assume that all the states that made up Greece had adhered to the same laws as Sparta, what would have been left us of that famous land? Its name would scarcely have come down to us. It would have scorned to produce historians, who would transmit its glory to posterity; the spectacle of its fierce virtues would have been lost to us; it would, therefore, have been a matter of indifference to us whether they had existed or not. The many systems of Philosophy which have exhausted all the possible combinations of our ideas, and which, although they have not greatly extended the limits of our mind, have at least taught us where they are fixed: those masterpieces of eloquence and of poetry that have taught us all the ways of the heart; the useful or the agreeable arts that preserve or embellish life; finally, the invaluable*

tradition of the thoughts and deeds of all the great men who have made for the glory or the happiness of their fellows: all these precious riches of the mind would have been lost forever. Centuries would have been added to centuries, generations of men would have succeeded one another like those of animals, without any profit to posterity, and would have left behind nothing but a confused memory of their existence; the world would have grown old, and men have remained in eternal childhood.

[45] Let us, in turn, assume that a Lacedaemonian swayed by the force of these arguments wanted to present them to his compatriots; and let us try to imagine the speech he might have given in the public square of Sparta.

[46] "Citizens, open your eyes and behold what you have been blind to. I am pained to see you laboring [*85*] solely in order to acquire virtue, to exercise your courage, and to preserve your freedom; yet you forget the more important duty of providing amusement for the idle of future generations. Tell me; what good is virtue if it does not cause a stir in the world? What will it have profited you to have been good men, if no one will talk about you? What will it matter to future centuries that at Thermopylae you sacrificed your lives to save the Athenians, if you do not, like they, leave systems of Philosophy, or poems, or comedies, or statues?* Hence hasten to give up laws that are good for nothing but to make you happy; think only of being much talked about when you will be no longer; and never forget that if great men were not celebrated, it would be useless to be one."

[47] This, I think, is more or less what this man might have said, if the Ephors had let him finish.

* Pericles had great talents, much eloquence, grandeur and taste: he embellished Athens with excellent sculptures, lavish buildings, and masterpieces in all the arts. And God knows how much he has been extolled as a result by the writing crowd! Yet it still remains to be seen whether Pericles was a good Magistrate: for in the management of leading States what matters is not to erect statues but to govern men well. I will not waste my time reviewing the secret causes of the Peloponnesian war, which ruined the Republic; I will not inquire whether Alcibiades's advice was well or ill founded; whether Pericles was justly or unjustly accused of embezzlement; I will only ask whether the Athenians became better or worse under his government; I will ask for the name of a single person among the Citizens, among the Slaves, or even among his own children whom his attentions made a good man. Yet this, it seems to me, is the Magistrate's and the Sovereign's foremost task. For the shortest and surest way of making men happy is not to adorn their cities nor even to enrich them, but to make them good.

[48] This is not the only passage where we are warned that virtue is good only for getting oneself talked about. Elsewhere the Philosopher's thoughts are again extolled to us, on the grounds that they are immortal and dedicated to the admiration of the ages; *whereas others see their ideas disappear with the day, the occasion, the moment that saw them born. For three quarters of mankind each new day erases the day before, leaving not a trace behind.* Ah! there is [*86*] at least some trace left in the testimony of a good conscience, the unfortunates one has helped, the good deeds performed, and the memory of the beneficent God one will silently have served. Dead or alive, good Socrates used to say, the good man is never forgotten by the Gods. I will, perhaps, be told that they were not talking about these sorts of thoughts; and I say that all others are not worth talking about.

[49] It is easy to imagine that where so little is made of Sparta, not much more esteem is shown for the ancient Romans. *We are prepared to believe that they were great men, although they did only small things.* On this basis I admit that for a long time now people have been doing only great things. Their temperance and their courage are taxed with having been not true virtues, but forced qualities;* yet a few pages below, it is acknowledged that Fabricius scorned Pyrrhus's gold, and it is impossible to be ignorant of the fact that Roman history is full of instances of how easily those Magistrates, those venerable warriors who made such a point of their poverty, could have enriched themselves.** As for courage, is

* I see most of the minds of my time exercising their ingenuity in dimming the glory of fine and generous ancient deeds, placing some base interpretation on them, and contriving vain occasions and causes for them. How subtle! Give me the most excellent and pure deed, I could easily find fifty plausible vicious motives for it. God knows, [for] anyone who wants to expand on it, what a variety of images assault our inmost will. They are not so much maliciously as they are clumsily and crudely ingenious in their calumny. All the trouble and license they take to demean these great names I would as soon take to elevate them. These rare personages, selected by the common consent of the wise as examples for the world, I shall not hesitate to add to their honor as much as my powers permit, by construal and favorable circumstances. And it is likely that all the efforts of our ingenuity are far beneath their merit. The task of good men is to portray virtue as beautiful as possible. And it would not be unseemly if passions carried us away in favor of such saintly forms. It is not Rousseau who says all this, it is Montaigne.

** Curius, refusing the presents of the Samnites, said that he would rather command men who have gold than have any himself. Curius was right Those who love

it not well known [*87*] that cowardice is deaf to reason, and that a poltroon continues to flee although he is certain to be killed in flight? *To wish to recall great States to the small virtues of small Republics is, they say, like wishing to compel a strong and a sturdy man to babble in a crib.* This is certainly a statement that cannot be unfamiliar at Courts. It would have been worthy of Tiberius or of Catherine de Medici, and I have no doubt that both of them often made ones like it.

[50] It would be hard to imagine morality having to be measured with a surveyor's tool. Yet the size of States cannot be said to be altogether unrelated to the Citizens' morals. Surely some proportion obtains between these things; I wonder whether this proportion is not an inverse one.* This is an important question which calls for meditation; and I believe that it may properly be regarded as still undecided, in spite of the more condescending than philosophic tone in which it is here settled in two words.

[51] *It was*, they go on, *Cato's madness: with his family's hereditary temper and prejudices, he perorated his whole life long, fought, and died without having done anything useful for his fatherland.* I do not know whether he did anything for his Fatherland; but I do know that he did a great deal for mankind, by offering it the spectacle and the model of the purest virtue that ever was: he taught those who sincerely love genuine honor how to resist their century's vices and to loathe the abominable maxim of the fashionable that one ought to do as others do; a maxim that would, no doubt, carry them far if they had the misfortune of falling in with a band of highwaymen. Someday our descendants will learn that in this century of wise men and of Philosophers the most virtuous of men was held up to ridicule and called [*88*] a madman, for having wished not to sully his great soul with his contemporaries' crimes, for having wished not to be a villain along with Caesar and the other brigands of his time.

riches are made [*87*] to serve, and those who despise them, to command. It is not the power of gold that subordinates the poor to the rich, it is that they want to become rich in their turn; otherwise they would necessarily be the masters.

* My adversaries' haughtiness might in the end lead me to commit an indiscretion, if I should continue to dispute with them. They believe that they impress me with their contempt for small States: are they not afraid that I might once ask them whether it is good that there be large ones?

[52] We have just seen how our Philosophers speak of Cato. Let us see how the ancient Philosophers spoke of him. *Behold a spectacle worthy of a god intent on his own work. Behold a spectacle of a struggle worthy of a god, a stalwart man grappling with evil fortune. I declare that I can see no fairer spectacle on earth for Jupiter to behold, should he wish to attend to it, than Cato, after his party's repeated defeats, standing upright still amidst his country's ruins.*

[53] Here is what we are told about the first Romans in another place: *I admire a Brutus, a Decius, a Lucretia, a Virginius, a Scaevola.* That is something, in the century we are in. *But I would admire even more a powerful and well-governed state.* A powerful state, and well governed! So would I, truly. *Where the Citizens are not condemned to such cruel virtues.* I understand; it is more comfortable to live where things are so constituted that everyone is exempt from being a good man. But if the Citizens of this admired state were, by some misfortune, reduced to having either to give up virtue or to practice those cruel virtues, and they had the strength to do their duty, would this then be a reason for admiring them any the less?

[54] Let us take the case our century finds most revolting, and examine the conduct of Brutus who, as sovereign Magistrate, has his children put to death after they had conspired against the State at a critical moment when almost anything might have overthrown it. It is certain that if he had pardoned them, his colleague would inevitably have saved all the other conspirators, and the Republic would have been lost. What does it matter, I will be asked? Since it makes so little difference, let us suppose that the Republic survived, and that Brutus, having condemned some criminal to death, the culprit had addressed him as follows: "Consul, why do you cause me to die? Have I done anything worse than to betray my fatherland? and am I not also your child?" I would like someone to take the trouble to tell me what Brutus could have answered.

[55] Brutus, I will further be told, should have abdicated the Consulship, rather than have his children put to death. And I say that any Magistrate who, at such a perilous juncture, [*89*] abandons the care of the fatherland and abdicates the Magistracy, is a traitor who deserves death.

[56] There is no middle ground; the alternative for Brutus was infamy or letting the heads of Titus and Tiberinus fall at his order

by the Lictors' axe. I am not saying that it follows that many people would have chosen as did he.

[57] Although one does not explicitly opt in favor of Rome's late period, we are clearly enough given to understand that it is preferred to Rome's early days; and one has as hard a time seeing great men behind the simplicity of these early days, as I have seeing honest people behind the pomp of the late period. A contrast is drawn between Titus and Fabricius; but this difference was overlooked, that in Pyrrhus's time all Romans were Fabriciuses, whereas in Titus's reign, he was the only good man.* I am ready to forget the heroic deeds of the first and the crimes of the late Romans: but what I cannot forget is that virtue was honored by the former and despised by the latter; and that when there were crowns for the winners of the Circus games, there no longer were any for the man who saved a Citizen's life. This should, however, not be thought to be peculiar to Rome. There was a time when the Republic of Athens was rich enough to spend huge sums on its spectacles and to pay Authors, Actors, and even Spectators a great deal of money: it was the very same time when no money could be found to defend the State against Philip's ventures.

[58] Finally the discussion turns to modern peoples; and I do not propose to take up the arguments that are judged to be relevant to this subject. I shall only note that the advantage gained by not refuting one's adversary's reasons, but preventing him from stating them, is not particularly honorable. [*90*]

[59] I shall also not take up all the reflections one has taken the trouble to make about luxury, politeness, the admirable education of our children,* the best methods to increase our

* If Titus had not been Emperor, we would never have heard of him; for he would have continued to live like everyone else: and he became a good man only once he ceased to follow the example of his century and was free to set it a better example. "As a private person, and even under his father's rule, he did not escape public hatred or even recrimination. But his reputation turned from bad to good and gave way to great praise [when it became evident that he was a good ruler]."

* There is no need to wonder whether fathers and teachers will take care to keep my dangerous writings out of their children's and pupils' sight. Indeed, what a frightful confusion, what indecency would result if these well-brought-up children were to scorn so many pretty things, and seriously to prefer virtue to knowledge? This reminds me of a Lacedaemonian preceptor's reply when he was mockingly asked what he would teach his student. *I will teach him*, he said, *to love all that*

knowledge, the usefulness of the Sciences and the pleasures of the fine Arts, and about many other points, a number of which are of no concern to me, some of which refute themselves, and the rest of which have already been refuted. I will leave it at citing several more passages selected at random, and which seem to me in need of elucidation. I have no choice but to restrict myself to [single] sentences, since I cannot take up arguments the thread of which I could not grasp.

[60] It is claimed that the ignorant Nations that had *ideas of glory and of virtue are individual exceptions which do not justify a presumption against the sciences.* Very well; but all learned Nations, with their fine ideas of glory and virtue, have always lost their love and practice of both. This is so without exception: let us go on to the proof. *In order to convince ourselves of it, let us look at the immense continent of Africa, [to the interior of] which no mortal is bold enough to penetrate, or lucky enough to have remained unscathed in the attempt.* Thus on the grounds that we have been unable to penetrate [to the interior of] the continent of Africa, that we are ignorant of what goes on there, we are made to conclude that its peoples are laden with vices: that would indeed have been the conclusion to draw if we had found a way of introducing our vices there. If I were the leader of one of the peoples of Niger, I declare that I would have a gallows erected at the country's border where I would cause to be hanged without appeal the first European who dared to enter it, and the first [*91*] Citizen who ventured to leave it.* *America offers us spectacles that are no less shameful for mankind.* Especially since the Europeans are there. *For every ignorant people that is virtuous, there will be a hundred that are barbarous or savage.* So be it; at least there will be one: but a people that is both virtuous and cultivates the sciences, that has never been seen. *The earth, when left uncultivated, is not idle, it produces poisons, it breeds monsters.* That is what it begins to do wherever the taste for the frivolous Arts has caused the taste for agriculture to be forsaken. *Our soul*, one might also

is honest. If I met such a man among us, I would whisper in his ear, Beware of speaking like that; for you will never have any students; say instead that you will teach them to chatter pleasantly, and I answer for your fortune.

* I may be asked what harm is done the state by a Citizen who leaves it never to return. He harms the rest by the bad example he sets, and himself by the vices he seeks. In either case it is up to the law to prevent it, and all in all it is preferable that he be hanged than that he be wicked.

say, *is not idle when virtue forsakes it. It produces fictions, Romances, Satires, Verse; it feeds vice.*

[61] *Barbarians have conquered only because they were most unjust.* What, pray, were we during our so greatly admired conquest of America? But then, how could people with artillery, naval charts, and compasses, commit injustices! Am I to be told that the outcome proves the Conquerors' valor? All it proves is their cunning and their skill; it proves that an adroit and clever man can owe to his industry the success which a brave man expects from his valor alone. Let us speak impartially. Whom shall we judge more courageous, the odious Cortès subjugating Mexico with powder, treachery and betrayal; or the unfortunate Guatimozin stretched by honest Europeans on a bed of burning coals to get his treasures, chiding one of his Officers when the same treatment wrests some moans from him, and proudly saying to him, What of me, am I on a bed of roses?

[62] *To say that the sciences are born of idleness is a manifest abuse of terms; they are born of leisure, but they protect against idleness.* I do not understand this distinction between idleness and leisure. But I do most certainly know that no honest man can ever boast of leisure as long as good remains to be done, a fatherland to be served, unfortunates to be relieved; and [92] I challenge anyone to show me how, on my principles, the word leisure can mean anything honest. *The Citizen whose needs tie him to the plow is no more occupied than the Geometer or the Anatomist.* Nor than the child building a house of cards, but more usefully. *Does everybody have to start tilling the soil, on the grounds that bread is necessary?* Why not? Let them even graze, if need be. I would still rather see men eat grass in the fields than devour one another in the cities: It is true that if they were such as I call for, they would be very like beasts; and that being such as they are, they are very like men.

[63] *The state of ignorance is a state of fear and of need. Everything is then a danger to our frailty. Death thunders overhead: it lurks in the grass underfoot: When one fears everything and needs everything, what could be a more reasonable attitude than to want to know everything?* One need only consider the constant worries of Doctors and Anatomists about their life and health, to decide whether knowledge helps to reassure us regarding the dangers we face. Since it always discovers many more dangers to us than means to protect ourselves against them, it is no

wonder that it only increases our worries and makes us pusillanimous. In all these respects, animals live in profound security, and are no worse off for it. A Heifer need not study botany to learn to pick over its hay, and the wolf devours its prey without thinking about indigestion. Will anyone meet these objections by daring to take the side of instinct against reason? That is precisely what I call for.

[64] *It would appear*, we are told, *that there are too many husbandmen and fear of a shortage of Philosophers. I shall ask, in turn, whether there is not fear of a shortage of people going into the lucrative professions. This is surely to underestimate the empire of covetousness. From childhood on, everything drives us into the useful occupations. And how many prejudices does one not have to overcome, how much courage to muster, to dare to be just a Descartes, a Newton, a Locke?*

[65] Leibniz and Newton died laden with goods and honors, and they deserved even more. Are we to say that it was out of moderation that they did not [*93*] raise themselves up to the plow? I know the empire of covetousness well enough to know that everything drives us toward the lucrative professions; that is why I say that everything drives us away from the useful professions. Men like Hébert, Lafrenaye, Dulac, Martin, earn more money in one day than all the plowmen of a Province could make in a month. I might suggest a somewhat odd puzzle in connection with the passage I am just now discussing. Namely, leaving out the first two lines, and reading it out of context, to guess whether it is taken from my writings or from my adversaries'.

[66] *Good books are the only protection of weak minds, that is to say of three-quarters of mankind, against infection by example.* In the first place, the Learned will never write as many good books as they set bad examples. In the second place, there will always be more bad books than good. In the third place, the best guides which honest men can have are reason and conscience: *A good mind needs little learning.* As for those whose mind is unsound or conscience hardened, reading cannot ever do them any good. Finally, for anyone whatsoever, the only books needed are the books of Religion, the only ones I have never condemned.

[67] *We are told to mourn the education of the Persians.* Note that it is Plato who claims this. I had thought to make myself a shield of that Philosopher's authority: but I see that nothing can protect me against my adversaries' animus: *Be he Trojan or Rutulian;* they

prefer to stab one another than to give me any quarter, and they hurt themselves more than they do me.* *That education was,* it is said, *founded on barbarous principles; because there was a different master for the exercise of each virtue, although virtue is indivisible; because it matters to inspire virtue, not to teach it; to instill love for practicing it, and not to demonstrate its Theory.* There is much I should [94] like to say in reply to this; but one should not insult one's Readers by telling them everything. I shall limit myself to the following two remarks. The first, that a person who wants to raise a child does not begin by telling him that he should practice virtue; for he would not be understood: rather, he begins by teaching him to be true, then to be temperate, then courageous, etc., and finally he tells him that all of these things together are called virtue. The second, that it is we who leave it at demonstrating Theory; but the Persians taught practice. See my discourse, p. 22**.

[68] *All the reproofs leveled at Philosophy attack the human mind.* I concede it. *Or rather, the author of nature, who made us as we are.* If he made us Philosophers, what is the good of going to so much trouble trying to become one? *The Philosophers were men; they erred; is this to be wondered at?* It is when they no longer err, that there will be cause for wonder. *Let us be sorry for them, profit from their mistakes, and correct ourselves.* Yes, let us correct ourselves, and philosophize no more . . . *A thousand roads lead to error, and only one to the truth?* That is precisely what I said. *Is it surprising that truth should so often have been mistaken, and been discovered so late?* Ah! So we have found it at last!

[69] *An opinion of Socrates's is urged against us, which dealt not with the Learned, but with the Sophists, not with the sciences, but with their possible abuse.* Can anyone who holds that all our sciences are nothing but abuse and all our Learned men nothing but true Sophists ask for more? *Socrates was the leader of a sect that taught doubt.* My veneration for Socrates would greatly diminish if I believed that he had had the silly vanity of wishing to be the leader of a sect. *And he justly censured the pride of anyone who claimed to*

* A new scheme for my defense occurs to me, and I am not sure that I may not some day have the weakness to carry it out. This defense will be made up exclusively of arguments drawn from the Philosophers; from which it would follow that they have all been chatterers as I maintain, if their arguments are found to be bad; or that I have won my case, if they are found to be good.

know everything. That is to say the pride of all Learned men. *True science is very far from such affectation*. Truly: but I am talking about ours. *Socrates here bears witness against himself*. I find this difficult to understand. *The most learned of Greeks did not blush at his own ignorance*. By his own admission, the most learned of Greeks knew nothing; draw your own conclusion about everyone else. *Hence the sciences do not arise from our vices*. Hence the sciences arise from our vices. *They are therefore not all born of human pride*. I have already stated my sentiment [95] in the matter. *Vain declamation, which can delude only informed minds*. I don't know how to reply to this.

[70] In speaking about the limits of luxury, it is claimed that this is a matter regarding which one should not reason from past to present. *When men walked about completely naked, the one to whom it first occurred to wear clogs was deemed a sensualist; from one century to the next, corruption has never ceased being decried, without its ever being understood what was meant by it*.

[71] It is true that up to now, luxury, although often prevalent, had at least at all times been viewed as the fatal source of infinitely many evils. It was left for M. Melon to be the first to publish the poisonous doctrine whose novelty brought him more followers than did the soundness of his reasoning. I am not afraid to be alone in my century to fight these odious maxims which only tend to destroy and debase virtue, and to make for rich people and wretches, that is to say for wicked people in either event.

[72] I am expected to be greatly embarrassed to be asked at what point should limits be placed on luxury. My sentiment is that there should be none at all. Everything beyond the physically necessary is a source of evil. Nature gives us quite enough needs; and it is at the very least exceedingly imprudent to multiply them unnecessarily, and thereby to place one's soul in greater dependence. It was not without reason that Socrates, seeing the display in a shop, congratulated himself on having no use for any of those things. The odds are a hundred to one that he who first wore clogs was punishable, unless his feet hurt. As for ourselves, we are too much in need of having shoes to be exempt from having virtue.

[73] I have already said elsewhere that I did not suggest overthrowing existing society, burning Libraries and all books, destroying Colleges and Academies: and I must here add that I also do not suggest reducing men to making do with the bare necessities.

I am quite sensible of the fact that one ought not to entertain the chimerical project of making honest men of them: but I believed myself obliged to state plainly the truth I was asked for. I have seen the evil and have tried to discover its causes: Others, more daring or more foolish, may seek the cure. [*96*]

[74] I grow weary and lay down my pen, not to take it up again in this excessively drawn-out dispute. I hear that a great many Authors* have sought to refute me. I am very sorry that I cannot answer them all. But I believe that my choice of those I did answer shows that it is not fear that keeps me from answering the others.

[75] I have tried to erect a monument that owed nothing of its strength and solidity to Art: truth alone, to which I have dedicated it, has the right to make it unassailable: And if I once again repulse the blows struck against it, it is more in order to do myself honor by defending it, than to lend it an assistance which it does not need.

[76] Let me be permitted to conclude by stating emphatically that the love of humanity and of virtue alone made me break my silence; and that the bitterness of my invectives against the vices I witness arises solely from the pain they cause me, and from my intense desire to see men happier, and especially worthier of being so.

* Even small critical sheets put out for the amusement of young people have done me the honor of remembering me. I have not read them, and I most certainly shall not read them; but nothing prevents me from taking notice of them as they deserve, and I have no doubt that all this is most amusing.

I am told that M. Gautier has done me the honor of a rebuttal although I did not answer him and even stated my reasons for not doing so. Evidently M. Gautier does not think them good reasons, since he takes the trouble to refute them. I see that I must yield to M. Gautier; and I wholeheartedly acknowledge my wrong in not having answered him; we are in agreement, then. I regret I cannot redress my fault. For unfortunately it is too late, and no one would know what I was talking about.

[*OC* III, *97*]

Letter
By
Jean-Jacques Rousseau
of Geneva

About a New Refutation of his Discourse by a Member of the Academy of Dijon

[1] I have just seen, Sir, a Pamphlet entitled *Discourse which won the prize of the Academy of Dijon in 1750, together with the refutation of that Discourse, by a Member of the Academy of Dijon who denied it his vote*; and I was thinking, as I was perusing this Writing, that, instead of stooping to edit my Discourse, the Academician who denied it his vote should really have published the work for which he did vote: that would have been an excellent way to refute mine.

[2] Here, then, is one of my Judges who does not hesitate to become one of my adversaries, and who finds it thoroughly objectionable that his colleagues should have honored me with the Prize: I confess that I was very surprised by it myself; I had tried to deserve it, but had done nothing to obtain it. Besides, although I know that Academies do not endorse the sentiments of the Writers they crown, and that the Prize is awarded not to the one who is believed to have defended the better cause, but to the one who has spoken best; even assuming that I had done so, I was far from expecting an Academy to display an impartiality which the learned do not by any means always observe when their self-interest is involved.

[3] But while I was surprised by my Judges' equity, I must confess that I am no less surprised by my adversaries' indiscretion: how dare they so publicly vent their ill-humor at the honor done me? [*98*] How can they fail to perceive the irreparable harm they thereby do their own cause? Let them not delude themselves into believing that anyone will be deceived about the reason for their vexation: it is not because my Discourse is badly made that they are annoyed at seeing it crowned; equally bad ones are daily crowned, and they do not say a word; it is for another reason, which bears more directly on their profession, and which is not difficult to perceive.

I knew that the sciences corrupt morals, render men unjust and jealous, and cause them to sacrifice everything to their self-interest and vainglory; but it seemed to me that this was done with a little more decency and skill: I saw that men of letters constantly talked about equity, moderation, virtue, and that it was behind the sacred shield of these fine words that they gave their passions and vices free rein with impunity; but I would never have believed they had the effrontery publicly to censure their Colleagues' impartiality. Everywhere else, reaching an equitable verdict at odds with their self-interest is the Judges' title to glory; only the sciences hold it against their practitioners to exhibit integrity: truly a fine prerogative, that.

[4] I dare say that the Academy of Dijon, by greatly contributing to my glory, greatly contributed to its own: the day will come when the adversaries of my cause will take advantage of this Judgment to prove that the cultivation of Letters can be combined with equity and disinterestedness. Whereupon the Partisans of truth will answer them: that is a particular instance that does seem to tell against us; but remember the scandal this Judgment caused in Literary circles at the time, and the manner in which they complained about it, and from it draw the correct conclusion about their maxims.

[5] It seems to me no less unwise to complain about the Academy's stating its topic in the form of a question: I leave aside how unlikely it was that, in the universal enthusiasm which today prevails, anyone would have had the courage willingly to forgo the Prize by declaring for the negative; but I cannot understand how Philosophers dare find it objectionable to be offered opportunities for discussion: [99] what a fine love of truth, that is frightened at having the pro and the con examined! In Philosophical inquiries the best way to render a sentiment suspect is to deny the opposite sentiment a hearing: whoever goes about it that way rather gives the impression of being in bad faith, and of not trusting the goodness of his cause. The whole of France eagerly awaits the Entry that will win the French Academy Prize this year; not only will it most certainly eclipse my Discourse, which will not be very difficult, but it will undoubtedly be a masterpiece. Yet, what will it contribute to the solution of the question? nothing at all; for after having read it, everyone will say: *This discourse is very fine; but if the Writer had been free to defend the opposite sentiment, he might well have written an even finer one.*

[6] I have perused this new refutation; for it is yet another one, and I cannot fathom why the Writings by my adversaries which bear this peremptory title are forever fated to be the ones in which I am the most inadequately refuted. I did peruse it, then, this refutation, without the least regret at having resolved not to answer anyone anymore: I will quote just one passage, and from it the Reader may judge whether I am right or wrong: here it is.

[7] *I will admit that it is possible to be an honest man without being talented; but does society require no more of us than being an honest man? And what is an honest man who is ignorant and without talents? a useless weight, burdensome even to the earth, etc.* I will certainly not reply to an Author capable of writing this way; but I believe that he can thank me for it.

[8] Nor is there any way, short of wishing to be as diffuse as the Author, to reply to the extensive collection of Latin texts, verses by La Fontaine, Boileau, Molière, Voiture, Regnard, M. Gresset, the story of Nimrod, or that of the Picardy Peasants; for what is one to say to a Philosopher who assures us that he is ill disposed toward the ignorant because his Farmer in Picardy, who is not a Doctor, does, it is true, pay him exactly what he owes him, but does not give him enough money for his land? The Author is so preoccupied with his land holdings that he even speaks about mine. Land of my own! Jean-Jacques Rousseau's land! [*100*] I really advise him to slander* me more skillfully than that.

[9] If I were to reply to any portion of the refutation, it would be to the personal remarks that abound in it; but as they do not bear on the question, I will not deviate from the steady maxim to which I have always adhered, to confine myself to the subject at hand without letting any personal considerations intrude: the genuine respect one owes the Public consists in sparing it not sad truths which it might find useful, but rather all the petty Authors' squabbles* with which polemical Writings are filled, and which

* If the Author does me the honor of refuting this Letter, he will no doubt prove by means of an elegant and learned argument, supported by most weighty authorities, that it is not a crime to own land: it may not be one for others, but it would be one for me.

* The Lyon Discourse provides an excellent model of how Philosophers should attack and fight without resorting to personalities or invectives. I flatter myself that my reply, which is in press, will also be found to be an example of how one

serve no other purpose than to indulge a shameful animus. I am charged with having drawn from Clenard** a word used by Cicero; so be it; that I have committed [*101*] solecisms; so much the better; that I pursue Literature and Music in spite of my low opinion of them; I will acknowledge, if I must, [that] I will have to pay at a more reasonable age the penalty for the amusements of my youth; but what difference does all this after all make to the public or to the cause of the Sciences? Rousseau may speak French badly, and yet Grammar be none the more useful to virtue. Jean-Jacques may behave badly, and the Learned behave none the better for it; that is all I shall and, I believe, all I need say in reply to this new refutation.

[10] I will conclude this Letter, as well as what I have to say on a subject that has been discussed at such length, with a caution to my adversaries which they will surely disregard, although it would benefit the side they wish to defend more than they might think; namely, not to heed their zeal to the point of neglecting to consult their strength, and *what their shoulders can carry*. They will undoubtedly tell me that I should have followed this advice myself,

can defend what one believes to be true, with all the strength at one's disposal, without bitterness against those who attack it.

** If I said that such a recondite reference surely comes from someone more familiar with Clenard's *Greek Primer* than with Cicero's *On Duties*, and who therefore seems to rush to the defense of Literature without much justification; if I added that there are professions, such as, for example, Surgery, where so many terms derived from the Greek are used that anyone practicing them has to acquire some rudimentary notions of that Language, I would be assuming the tone of my new adversary, and answering as he might have done in my place. I can, however, answer that when I suggested the word *Investigation*, I sought to be of use to the Language, by trying to introduce a gentle, harmonious term, with an already familiar meaning, and which has no French synonym. I believe that these are the only conditions required to justify the exercise of this salutary freedom:

Why should I be denied this privilege if it can achieve some small benefit;
When Cato's and Ennius's speech have enriched the language of the fatherland?

Above all, I wanted to convey my idea accurately; I do, it is true, know that the first rule of all our Writers is to write cor[*101*]rectly and idiomatically; but then they have pretensions, and want to be considered correct and elegant. The first rule I follow, who do not in the least care about what may be thought of my style, is to make myself understood: any time I can make my point more forcefully or clearly with ten solecisms, I will never hesitate to do so. So long as Philosophers understand me clearly, I am ready to let purists go chasing after words.

and that may be true; but there is at least this difference, that I was alone of my party, whereas theirs being the party of the crowd, latecomers are either excused from joining the fray, or obliged to do better than the others.

[11] Lest this appear a rash or presumptuous piece of advice, I here add one sample of my adversaries' reasoning, on the basis of which the relevance and force of their criticism may be judged. *A few centuries ago*, I had said, *the Peoples of Europe lived in a state worse than ignorance; I know not what scientific jargon more contemptible still than ignorance had usurped the name of knowledge, and stood as an almost insuperable obstacle in the path of its return: it took a revolution to bring men back to common sense.* Peoples had lost common sense not because they were ignorant, but because they were [*102*] so foolish as to believe that with Aristotle's big words and Raymond Lulle's pretentious doctrine they knew something; it took a revolution to teach them that they knew nothing, and another is badly needed to teach us the same truth. Here is my adversaries' argument on this point: *This revolution was brought about by Letters; they restored common sense, as the Author himself admits; yet they also, according to him, corrupted morals: it follows that a People must give up common sense in order to have good morals.* Three Writers in succession have repeated this fine argument: I now ask them, what would they rather I blamed, their minds for failing to grasp the perfectly clear meaning of this passage, or their bad faith for pretending not to understand it? Since they are men of Letters, there can be no doubt about which they will choose. But what are we to say about the silly interpretations this latest adversary sees fit to give of my Frontispiece? I should have thought I was insulting Readers, and treating them like children, if I had interpreted such an obvious allegory for them; if I had told them that Prometheus's torch is the torch of the Sciences made to quicken great geniuses; that the Satyr who, seeing fire for the first time, runs toward it, and wants to embrace it, represents the vulgar who, seduced by the brilliance of Letters, indiscreetly give themselves over to study; that the Prometheus who cries out and warns them of the danger is the Citizen of Geneva. This allegory is apt, fine, I dare believe it is sublime. What is one to think of a Writer who has meditated on it, and could not succeed in understanding it? It is likely that he would not have been a great Doctor among his friends, the Egyptians.

[12] I therefore take the liberty of recommending to my adversaries, and especially to the latest one among them, the following wise lesson formulated by a Philosopher in connection with another subject: recognize that no one's objections can harm your side as much as can your own bad rejoinders; recognize that if you have not said anything worthwhile, people will disparage your cause by doing you the honor of believing that nothing better could have been said on its behalf.

I am, etc.

[*OC* II, 959]

PREFACE to *NARCISSUS*

[1] I wrote this Play at the age of eighteen, and refrained from showing it as long as I cared at all about my reputation as an Author. I finally felt bold enough to publish it, but I shall never feel so bold as to say anything about it. So that what is at issue here is not my play, but myself.

[2] I must speak about myself in spite of my aversion to doing so; I must either acknowledge the faults attributed to me, or vindicate myself. I realize that it will not be an even match. For I will be attacked with witticisms, and I will defend myself with nothing but arguments: but provided I convince my adversaries, I do not much care whether I persuade them; in striving to deserve my own esteem, I have learned to do without the esteem of others, who, after all, for the most part do without mine. But while it does not matter to me whether I am thought of well or ill, it does matter to me that no one have the right to think ill of me, and it matters to the truth I have upheld that its defender not be justly accused of having lent it his assistance on a mere whim or out of vanity, without loving or knowing it.

[3] The side I chose in the question I was investigating some years ago did not fail to make me a host of adversaries,* who per-

* I am told that a number of people object to my calling my adversaries my adversaries, and I am quite prepared to believe it, in a century in which people no longer dare to call anything by its name. I also hear that each one of my adversaries complains that when I answer objections other than his own, I am wasting my time fighting chimeras; which confirms something I had rather suspected, namely that they do not waste their time reading or listening to one another. As for myself, I thought it incumbent on me to take that trouble, [960] and I have read the numerous writings against me which they have published, from the first reply with which I was honored, to the four German sermons of which one begins more or less as follows: *My brethren, if Socrates were to return among us and see the thriving state of the sciences in Europe; what am I saying, in Europe? in Germany; what am I saying, in Germany? in Saxony; what am I saying, in Saxony? in Leipzig; what am I saying, in Leipzig? in this University; then, smitten with astonishment and filled with respect, Socrates would modestly take his place among our pupils and, under our tutelage, humbly absorbing our teaching, he would soon be rid of the ignorance of which he so justifiably complained.* I read all this and made only a few replies. Perhaps that was still too many. But I am pleased that these Gentlemen should have liked them enough to be jealous of those who were favored with them. As for the people who are shocked by the word *adversaries*, I will gladly give it up if they will kindly show me another by which to refer not

haps cared more about the interests [*960*] of men of letters than about the honor of literature. I had anticipated as much, and I rather suspected that their conduct on this occasion would do more for my cause than would all my discourses. Indeed, they did not hide their astonishment and vexation that an Academy should have displayed integrity so inopportunely. In their effort to undermine the authority of its judgment, they did not spare it insults or even falsehoods.** Nor was I forgotten in their tirades. Some undertook to refute me directly: the wise could see how cogently, and the public how successfully they did so. Others, more skillful, knowing the danger of attacking established truths head-on, adroitly deflected attention to my person when it should have been focused exclusively on my arguments, and their accusations against me set off debates that caused my more serious accusations against them to be forgotten. [*961*] They are, therefore, the ones who have to be answered once and for all.

[4] They contend that I do not believe a word of the truths I upheld, and that while I was proving one proposition, I continued to believe its opposite. That is tantamount to saying that I proved such outlandish things that people can claim I could have upheld them only in jest. What a fine tribute they thereby pay the science that serves as the foundation of all the others; for one certainly has to believe that the art of reasoning is most helpful in the discovery of truth when one sees it successfully used to prove absurdities!

[5] They contend that I do not believe a word of the truths I upheld; this is evidently a convenient new way of theirs to assail unassailable arguments, to refute even the proofs of Euclid, and all demonstrated truths in the universe. Now, it seems to me that those who so rashly accuse me of speaking in contradiction with my

only to *all* those who have attacked my sentiment either in writing or, more cautiously and safely, at gatherings of ladies and wits where they were sure I would not go to defend myself, but also to those who now pretend to believe that I have no adversaries, but who at first found my adversaries' replies irrefutable and who, once I had refuted them, blamed me for having done so because, according to them, I had not been attacked. Meanwhile I trust that they will permit me to call my adversaries my adversaries, for in spite of the politeness of my century, I am as crude as Philip's Macedonians.

** In the *Mercure* for August 1752 will be found a disclaimer by the Academy of Dijon of I know not what writing which its Author had falsely attributed to one of the members of that Academy.

thought have few scruples themselves about speaking in contradiction with theirs: for, as I shall soon prove, they have surely not found anything in my Writings or in my conduct that could have given them this idea; and they must know that a man who speaks seriously must be thought to believe what he says, unless either his actions or his discourses belie it; and even this is not always enough to be sure that he does not believe it.

[6] They may therefore proclaim as loudly as they please that when I came out against the sciences, I spoke in contradiction with my sentiment; I know of only one reply to a claim so rash and so devoid of proof or plausibility; it is short, vigorous, and I ask them to consider it delivered.

[7] They also contend that my conduct contradicts my principles, and they undoubtedly rely on this second charge to establish the first; for there are many people who can discover proofs for what is not [so]. Thus they will say that it is unbecoming for someone who writes music and poetry to denigrate the fine arts, and that literature, which I profess to despise, can, after all, be pursued in a thousand more praiseworthy ways than by writing Plays. This accusation, too, has to be answered. [*962*]

[8] First of all; even if it were strictly granted, I say that it would prove that I behave badly, but not that I fail to speak in good faith. If it were permissible to derive proofs about men's sentiments from their actions, we would have to say that the love of justice has been banished from all hearts, and that there is not a single Christian on earth. Show me men who always act in conformity with their maxims, and I will condemn mine. It is mankind's fate that reason shows us the goal, and the passions divert us from it. Hence, even if it were true that I do not act according to my principles, this, by itself, would not be reason enough to accuse me of speaking in contradiction with my sentiment, or to accuse my principles of being false.

[9] But if I wished to concede the point, all I would have to do, in order to reconcile matters, is to contrast the [different] times [involved]. I have not always had the good fortune to think as I do now. Long seduced by the prejudices of my century, I took study to be the only occupation worthy of a wise man, I looked upon the sciences with nothing but respect, and upon the learned with

nothing but admiration.* I did not understand that one can err while endlessly proving things, or do evil while endlessly talking about wisdom. Only after I had seen things from close up did I learn to assess them at their true worth; and although I had, in my researches, always found *enough glibness, not enough wisdom*, it took me much reflection, much observation, and much time to rid myself of my illusions about all this vain scientific pomp. It is not surprising that during those days of prejudice and error, when I held being an Author in such high regard, I occasionally aspired to be one myself. It was then that I wrote the Poems and most of the other Pieces that have issued from my pen, this little Play among them. It might be rather [*963*] harsh to reproach me now for these diversions of my youth, and it would be wrong, to say the least, to accuse me on their account of having contradicted principles I did not yet hold. I long ago ceased to set any store whatsoever by any of these things; and to venture to offer them to the Public under these circumstances, after having had the sense to hang on to them this long, is to indicate clearly enough that I am equally indifferent to the praise and to the blame they may deserve; for I no longer think as did the Author whose work they are. They are illegitimate children one fondles with pleasure even while blushing to be their father, to whom one bids a final good-bye and sends off to seek their fortune without worrying too much about what will become of them.

[10] But all this is to argue at excessive length on the basis of chimerical assumptions. If the accusation that I cultivate letters while despising them is unfounded, then there is no need for me to defend myself against it; and even if it were in fact true, it would not involve an inconsistency: which is what remains for me to prove.

[11] To this end, as is my wont, I will follow the simple and easy method that suits the truth. I will once again set forth the problem, I will once again state my sentiment, and I will wait to be shown how, in terms of this account, my deeds belie my speeches. My

* Whenever I recall my former simplicity, I cannot help laughing. In every book of Ethics or Philosophy I read, I believed I saw the Author's soul and principles. I looked upon all these grave Writers as modest, wise, virtuous, irreproachable men. I entertained angelic notions about what it would be like to have dealings with them, and I would have approached the house of any one of them as if it were a sanctuary. Finally I saw them; this childish prejudice vanished, and it is the only error of which they have cured me.

adversaries, for their part, will not be at a loss for a reply, since they have mastered the wonderful art of arguing pro and con on all manner of subjects. They will begin, as is their wont, by setting forth an altogether different question according to their fancy; they will have me resolve it to suit themselves: in order to attack me more easily they will have me arguing not in my own way, but in theirs; they will skillfully shift the Reader's eyes from the primary object and fix them to the right or to the left; they will fight a specter and claim to have defeated me: but I will have done what I must do, and I begin.

[12] "Science is good for nothing, and never does anything but harm, because it is by its very nature bad. It is as inseparable from vice as ignorance is from virtue. All lettered peoples have at all times been corrupt; all ignorant peoples have been virtuous: in a word, only the learned are vicious, only a man who knows nothing is virtuous. There is a way, then, [*964*] for us to become honest folk again: to banish science and the learned forthwith, to burn our libraries, to close our Academies, our Colleges, our Universities, and to plunge back into the full barbarism of the first centuries."

[13] This much my adversaries have thoroughly refuted; but then, I never said or thought a single word of it, and it is impossible to imagine anything more contrary to my system than this absurd doctrine they are so good as to attribute to me. Here is what I did say, and what has not been refuted.

[14] The issue was whether the restoration of the arts and sciences had contributed to the purification of our morals.

[15] By showing, as I did, that our morals were not purified,* the question was more or less resolved.

* When I said that our morals had been corrupted, I did not mean to say that our ancestors' morals were good, but only that ours were even worse. There are a thousand sources of corruption among men; and although the sciences may be the most profuse and swiftest in their effect, they are far from being the only one. The destruction of the Roman Empire, the invasions by hosts of Barbarians have made for a mixture of all peoples that must inevitably have destroyed the morals and customs of each of them. The crusades, commerce, the discovery of the Indies, navigation, far-flung expeditions, and still other causes which I do not wish to mention, have perpetuated and increased this disarray. Everything that facilitates communication between nations transmits not the virtues, but the crimes of each to the others, and adulterates the morals appropriate to the climate of each and to the constitution of its government. So that the sciences have not done all the harm; they have only had a considerable share in it, and the harm most specifically

[16] But it implicitly raised another, more [*965*] general and more important question, about the necessary influence of the pursuit of the sciences on the morals of peoples under any circumstances. It was this question, of which the first is but a corollary, that I undertook to examine with care.

[17] I began with the facts, and showed that in every people of the world morals have deteriorated in proportion as a taste for study and letters has spread among them.

[18] That was not all; for although it was impossible to deny that these things always occurred together, it was possible to deny that one brought about the other: I therefore endeavored to establish this necessary connection. I showed that the source of our errors on this point is our mistaking our vain and deceptive knowledge for the sovereign intelligence that sees the truth of all things at a glance. Science, taken abstractly, deserves all our admiration. The foolish science of men deserves nothing but derision and contempt.

[19] A taste for letters always heralds the beginning of corruption in a people, and very rapidly accelerates it. For, in an entire nation, this taste can only arise from two sources, both of them bad, and both of them perpetuated and increased by study, namely idleness and a craving for distinction. In a well-constituted State, every citizen has duties to fulfill; and he holds these important cares too dear to find leisure for frivolous speculations. In a well-constituted State all citizens are so thoroughly equal that no one may enjoy precedence over others as being the most learned or even the most skilled, but at most for being the best: though this last distinction is often dangerous; for it makes for scoundrels and hypocrites.

[20] A taste for letters born of a craving for distinction necessarily engenders evils infinitely more dangerous than all the good of letters is useful, in that those who yield to it eventually become quite

due to them is that they have given our vices a pleasing appearance, an air of honesty that keeps us from abominating them. When *The Villain* was first performed, I recall that people did not think that the play's title really fit the main character. Cleon seemed to be simply an ordinary man; he was just like everyone else, they said. This frightful scoundrel, whose character is so thoroughly laid bare that everyone who has the misfortune of resembling him should have been made to shudder at himself, was judged to be an altogether unsuccessfully drawn character, and his darkest deeds were thought charming because men who regarded themselves as very honest folk recognized themselves in him feature by feature.

unscrupulous about the means of success. The first Philosophers earned great renown by teaching men to perform their duties and the principles of virtue. But before long these precepts had become commonplaces, and in order to achieve distinction men had to strike out in opposite directions. Such is the origin of the absurd systems of such men as Leucippus, Diogenes, Pyrrho, Protagoras, Lucretius. The Hobbeses, [966] the Mandevilles and a thousand others have chosen to achieve distinction among us in the same way; and their dangerous teaching has borne so much fruit that, although we still have some true Philosophers eager to recall to our hearts the laws of humanity and virtue, it is horrifying to see how far the maxims of our ratiocinating century have carried contempt for the duties of man and citizen.

[21] A taste for letters, philosophy, and the fine arts destroys the love of our primary duties and of true glory. Once talents preempt the honors owed to virtue, everyone wants to be an agreeable man, and no one cares to be a good man. This gives rise to the further inconsistency that men are rewarded only for qualities which do not depend on them: for we are born with our talents, only our virtues belong to us.

[22] The first and almost the only care taken for our education is both the fruit and the seed of these ridiculous prejudices. In the name of teaching us letters, we are made to suffer torments throughout our unhappy youth: we know all the rules of grammar before we ever hear any mention of man's duties: we know everything that has been done up to now before we are told anything about what we should do; and as long as we are trained to prattle, nobody cares whether we know how to act or think. In a word, we are required to be learned only in things that can be of no use to us; and our children are brought up exactly like the athletes of the ancient public games who carefully avoided using their strong limbs for any kind of productive work because they dedicated them to a pointless and superfluous exercise.

[23] A taste for letters, philosophy, and the fine arts softens bodies and souls. Work in the study makes men frail and weakens their temperament, and it is difficult for the soul to retain its vigor once the body has lost its vigor. Study wears out the machine, exhausts the mind, destroys strength, enervates courage, and this alone shows us clearly enough that it is not designed for us: this is

how men grow cowardly and pusillanimous, equally incapable of withstanding pain and the passions. Everyone knows how unfit city dwellers are to endure the toils of war, and the reputation of [*967*] men of letters as regards bravery is familiar enough.* And nothing is more justly suspect than a coward's honor.

[24] So many reflections on the weakness of our nature often do no more than divert us from generous enterprises. The more we think about the miseries of mankind, the more our imagination oppresses us with their weight, and too much forethought robs us of courage by robbing us of confidence. It is in vain that we strive to provide against unforeseen accidents "if science, trying to arm us with new defenses against natural inconveniences, has impressed our imagination more deeply with their magnitude and weight than with its own reasons and the vain subtleties that lead us to seek cover behind it."

[25] A taste for philosophy loosens all the bonds of esteem and benevolence that tie men to society, and this is perhaps the most dangerous of the evils it engenders. The charm of study soon dulls all other attachments. What is more, continued reflection on mankind, continued observation of men, teach the Philosopher to judge them at their worth, and it is difficult to have much affection for what one holds in contempt. Before long he comes to focus on himself alone all the interest which virtuous men share with their fellows; his contempt for others heightens his pride: his amour propre grows in direct proportion to his indifference to the rest of the universe. Family, fatherland, become for him words devoid of meaning: he is neither parent, nor citizen, nor man; he is a philosopher.

[26] While the pursuit of the sciences draws the philosopher's heart away from the crowd, as it were, in another sense it draws in the heart of the man of letters, and in both cases it does so with equal prejudice to virtue. Anyone who cultivates the agreeable talents wants to please, to be admired, and indeed wants to be admired more than anyone else is. Public applause is to be his alone: I [*968*]

* Here is a modern example for the benefit of those who accuse me of mentioning only ancient examples. The Republic of Genoa, looking for a way to subjugate the Corsicans more completely, found none more effective than to establish an Academy among them. I would have no difficulty expanding this Note, but to do so would be to insult the intelligence of the only Readers I care about.

would say that he does everything to obtain it, if he did not do even more to deprive his competitors of it. Hence arise, on the one hand, the refinements of taste and politeness; vile and obsequious flattery, seductive, insidious, childish attentions which in time diminish the soul and corrupt the heart; and, on the other hand, the jealousies, the rivalries, the well-known hatred of artists for one another, sly slander, deceit, treachery, and all the most cowardly and odious aspects of vice. If the philosopher holds men in contempt, the artist soon causes them to hold him in contempt, and in the end both conspire to render them contemptible.

[27] There is more; and of all the truths I submitted to the judgment of the wise, this is the most arresting and the most cruel. All our Writers regard the crowning achievement of our century's politics to be the sciences, the arts, luxury, commerce, laws, and all the other bonds which, by tightening the social ties* among men through self-interest, place them all in a position of mutual dependence, impose on them mutual needs and common interests, and oblige everyone to contribute to everyone else's happiness in order to secure his own. These are certainly fine ideas, and they are presented in an attractive light. But when they are examined carefully and impartially, the advantages which they seem at first to hold out prove to be subject to a good many reservations.

[28] What a wonderful thing, then, to have put men in a position where they can only live together by obstructing, supplanting, deceiving, betraying, destroying one another! From now on we must take care never to let ourselves be seen as we are: because for every two men whose interests coincide, perhaps a hundred thousand oppose them, and the only way to succeed is either to deceive or to ruin all those people. This is the fatal source of the violence, the betrayals, the treacheries and all the horrors necessarily required by a state of [*969*] affairs in which everyone pretends to be working for the profit or reputation of the rest, while only seeking to raise his own above theirs and at their expense.

* I complain that Philosophy loosens the bonds of society formed by mutual esteem and benevolence, and I complain that the sciences, the arts and all the other objects of commerce tighten the bonds of society through self-interest. And it is indeed impossible to tighten one of these bonds without the other relaxing by as much. There is therefore no contradiction here.

[29] What have we gained from all this? Much chatter, rich men and argumentative ones, that is to say enemies of virtue and common sense. In return we have lost innocence and morals. The multitude grovels in poverty; all are the slaves of vice. Uncommitted crimes dwell deep inside men's hearts, and all that keeps them from being carried out is the assurance of impunity.

[30] What a strange and ruinous constitution, where having wealth invariably makes it easier to get more, and it is impossible for the man who has nothing to acquire anything; where a good man has no escape from his misery; where the basest are the most honored, and where one has to renounce virtue in order to become an honest man! I know that sermonizers have said all this a hundred times; but they were delivering sermons, whereas I give reasons; they perceived the evil, and I lay bare its causes, and above all I point out something highly consoling and useful by showing that all these vices belong not so much to man, as to man badly governed.* [*970*]

* I have noticed that at present a great many petty maxims hold sway in the world which seduce simple minds with a false semblance of philosophy and are, besides, very handy for cutting off discussions in an authoritative and peremptory tone without having to consider the issue. One of them is: "Men are everywhere subject to the same passions; everywhere amour propre and self-interest guide them; hence they are everywhere the same." When Geometers make an assumption which, argument by argument, leads them to an absurd conclusion, they retrace their steps, and so show the assumption false. The same method, applied to the maxim in question, would readily show its absurdity: But let us argue differently. A Savage is a man, and a European is a man. The half philosopher immediately concludes that the one is no better than the other; but the philosopher says: In Europe the government, the laws, the customs, self-interest, everything places individuals under the necessity of deceiving one another, and of doing so incessantly; everything conspires to make vice a duty for them; they must be wicked if they are to be wise, since there is no greater folly than to provide for the happiness of scoundrels at the expense of one's own. Among Savages self-interest speaks as insistently as it does among us, but it does not say the same things: love of society and care for their [*970*] common defense are the only bonds that unite them: the word *property*, which causes so many crimes among our honest folk, is, for them, almost devoid of meaning; discussions about interests that divide them simply do not arise among them; nothing leads them to deceive one another; public esteem is the only good to which everyone aspires and which they all deserve. It is perfectly possible that a Savage might commit a bad action, but it is not possible that he will acquire the habit of doing evil, because it would profit him nothing. I believe that men's morals can be very accurately gauged by how much business they have with one another: the more dealings they have, the more they admire their talents and their industry, the more decorously and cunningly are they vil-

[31] These are the truths I have expounded and tried to prove in the various Writings I have published on this subject. Here now are the conclusions I have drawn from them.

[32] Science is not suited to man in general. He forever goes astray in his quest for it; and if he sometimes attains it, he almost always does so to his detriment. He is born to act and to think, not to reflect. Reflection only makes him unhappy without making him better or wiser: it causes him to regret past benefits and keeps him from enjoying the present: it shows him a happy future that his imagination might seduce and his desires torment him, and an unhappy future that he might experience it in anticipation. Study corrupts his morals, affects his health, ruins his temperament, and often spoils his reason: even if it did teach him something, it would seem to me to be a poor compensation.

[33] I acknowledge that there are a few sublime geniuses capable of piercing the veils in which the truth wraps itself, a few privileged souls able to resist the folly of vanity, base jealousy, and the other passions aroused by a taste for letters. The small number who have the good fortune of combining these qualities are the beacon and the honor of mankind; only they may properly engage in study for the good of all [*971*], and this very exception confirms the rule; for if all men were Socrates, science would do them no harm, but neither would they need it.

[34] Any people with morals, and hence with respect for its laws and without desire to improve on its traditional ways, must carefully guard against the sciences, and above all against men of science and learning whose sententious and dogmatic maxims would soon teach it to despise both its ways and its laws; which is something a nation can never do without being corrupted. The slightest change in customs, even if it is in some respects for the better, invariably proves prejudicial to morals. For customs are the morality of the people; and as soon as the people ceases to respect them, it is left with no rule but its passions, and no curb but the laws, which can sometimes

lains, and the more contemptible they are. I say it reluctantly: the good man is he who has no need to deceive anyone, and the Savage is that man.

He is not moved by the people's fasces, nor by the King's purple,
Nor by the discord that pits faithless brothers against one another;
Nor by Rome's affairs, nor by kingdoms doomed to fall. Neither does he
In his misery pity the poor, or envy the rich.

keep the wicked in check, but can never make them good. Besides, once philosophy has taught the people to despise its customs, it soon learns the secret of eluding its laws. I therefore say that a people's morals are like a man's honor; they are a treasure to be preserved, but which cannot be recovered once lost.*

[35] But once a people is to a certain extent corrupted, should the sciences – regardless of whether they did or did not contribute to the corruption – be banished, or the people be shielded from them, either in order to be improved, or to be kept from becoming worse? This is another question about which I positively declared for the negative. For, in the first place, since [972] a vicious people never returns to virtue, the problem is not how to make good those who are no longer so, but how to keep good those who are fortunate enough to be so. In the second place, the same causes that have corrupted peoples sometimes help prevent a greater corruption; thus, a man who has ruined his temperament by an injudicious use of medicines is forced to continue to rely on doctors in order to stay alive; and that is how the arts and sciences, having fostered the vices, become necessary to keep them from turning into crimes; at least they coat them with a varnish that prevents the poison from being exuded quite so freely. They destroy virtue, but preserve its public semblance,* and this at least is a fine thing to do. They introduce politeness and propriety in its stead, and for the fear of appearing wicked they substitute the fear of appearing ridiculous.

* I find in history a unique but striking example that seems to contradict this maxim: the founding of Rome by a troop of bandits whose descendants within a few generations became the most virtuous people that ever was. I would have no difficulty explaining this fact if this were the place to do so; but I will leave it at pointing out that the founders of Rome were not so much men whose morals were corrupt as men whose morals had not yet been formed: they did not despise virtue, rather, they did not yet know it; for the words *virtues* and *vices* are collective notions which arise only in dealings among men. Besides, the example of Rome lends no support to the case for the sciences: for the two first Kings of Rome, who gave the Republic form and instituted its customs and morals, were concerned, the one with nothing but wars, the other with nothing but sacred rites; the two things in the world that are at the farthest remove from philosophy.

* This semblance consists in a certain mildness of morals which sometimes compensates for their lack of purity, a certain appearance of order which averts terrible confusion, a certain admiration for what is fine which keeps what is good from being entirely forgotten. Vice here dons the mask of virtue not as hypocrisy does, in order to deceive and betray, but rather in order to escape, behind this pleasing and sacred effigy, its horror at itself when it sees itself uncovered.

[36] My opinion, as I have already said more than once, is therefore to preserve and even carefully to support Academies, Colleges, Universities, Libraries, Spectacles and all the other amusements that might to some extent distract men's wickedness, and prevent them from spending their idleness in more dangerous pursuits. For in a land where honest folk and good morals no longer count, it would still be preferable to live among scoundrels than among bandits.

[37] Now, I ask, where is the contradiction, when I cultivate tastes whose progress I approve? It is no longer a matter of getting people to do good, but only of distracting them from doing evil; they must be kept busy with trifles to divert them from evil deeds; they must be entertained rather than sermonized. If my Writings have edified the small number of good [people], then I have done them all the good it was in my power to do, though it may also be useful to them to have the rest of the people provided with things that distract them and [*973*] keep them from thinking about them. I would count myself most happy to have a Play a day hissed, if at that price I could keep the evil intentions of but a single one of its Spectators in check for two hours, and safeguard the honor of his friend's daughter or wife, the secret of those who have confided in him, or the fortune of his creditor. When morals are no more, one has to think exclusively in terms of the polity; and it is well enough known that Music and Theater are among its most important concerns.

[38] If my justification leaves some difficulties unresolved, I dare say frankly that it does so not with regard to the public or to my adversaries, but with regard to myself alone: for only by examining myself can I decide whether I should count myself among the few, and whether my soul can bear the burden of literary pursuits. I have sensed their danger more than once; I have given them up more than once with the intention of never taking them up again, and, in renouncing their seductive charm, I sacrificed the only pleasures that could still delight my heart for the sake of its peace. If in the weariness that overcomes me, if at the end of a difficult and painful life, I have dared to take them up again for a few moments more in order to relieve my suffering, I at least believe that I have not become so interested or involved in them as to deserve on their account the just reproofs I have leveled at men of letters.

[39] I needed a test in order to achieve full self-knowledge, and I did not hesitate to perform that test. Once I knew how my soul reacted to literary success, it remained for me to see how it would react to setbacks. I now know, and I can openly state the worst. My Play suffered the fate which it deserved and which I anticipated; but except that it bored me, I left the performance much more satisfied with myself, and with better reason, than if it had succeeded.

[40] I therefore advise those who are so eager to find reasons to reproach me to be prepared to study my principles and to observe my conduct more carefully before they tax them with contradiction and incoherence. If they ever see that I am starting to curry the public's favor, or that it flatters my vanity to have composed pretty songs, or that I blush to have written poor Plays, or that I seek to undermine my rivals' fame, or that I presume to speak ill of the great [*974*] men of the age in order to raise myself to their level by lowering them to mine, or that I aspire to positions in Academies, or that I dance attendance on the women who set the tone, or that I fawn on the foolishness of the Great, or that I become contemptuous of the craft I have chosen and strike out in quest of wealth, no longer wishing to live by the work of my hands, in a word if they notice that the love of reputation causes me to forget the love of virtue, I beg them to warn me, even publicly, and I promise instantly to commit my Writings and my Books to the flames, and to concede all the errors they may wish to reproach me with.

[41] In the meantime I shall write Books, compose Poems and Music, if I have the talent, the time, the strength and the will to do so: I shall continue to state openly the bad opinion in which I hold letters and those who practice them,* and to believe that I am

* I am amazed at how confused most men of letters have been in this affair. When they saw the sciences and arts under attack, they took it personally, whereas all of them could, without any self-contradiction, hold the same view I do, that while these things have done society great harm, it is now essential to use them against the harm they have done, as one does a medication or those noxious insects that have to be crushed on the bite [they leave]. In a word, there is not a single man of letters who, if his conduct can pass the test in the preceding paragraph, could not say on his own behalf what I say on mine; and it seems to me that an argument along these lines suits them all the better in that, entre nous, they care very little about the sciences as long as they continue to bring honor to men of science. They are like pagan priests, who valued religion only as long as it won them respect.

not worth any the less for it. True, people may some day say: This avowed enemy of the sciences and arts nevertheless wrote and published Plays; and I admit that the remark will be a most bitter satire, not on myself, but on my century.

[*OC* III, *103*]

Preface
of a Second Letter
to Bordes

[1] Forced by renewed attacks to break the silence I had imposed on myself in this drawn-out dispute, I do not scruple once again to take up the pen I had abandoned. If, in the judgment of the Wise, I can shed some new light on the important maxims I established, I do not care if the Public grows bored with seeing the same question discussed for so long: for even if the responsibility for it were not the attackers', I am not inclined to sacrifice my zeal for the truth to solicitude for my reputation, and I do not see why I should be so afraid of boring Readers whom I am so little afraid of displeasing.

[2] I believe I have discovered great things, and have stated them with a rather dangerous frankness, and none of this is particularly praiseworthy; for my independence was my whole courage and long meditations have stood me in the stead of Genius. A solitary who enjoys living by himself naturally acquires a taste for reflection, and a man who takes a lively interest in the happiness of others without being in need of them for his own does not have to spare their false delicacy in the useful things he has to tell them. As such a condition is exceptional, and as I have the good fortune to find myself in it, I feel obliged to put it to use on behalf of the truth, and to state it without reservations whenever it will appear to me to bear on men's innocence or happiness. If it was a mistake on my part to pledge myself to silence when I should not have done so, I must not commit a greater mistake by stubbornly keeping my word in the face of my duty, and it is in order to remain faithful to my principles that I wish to give up my errors as soon as I notice them. [*104*]

[3] I shall pick up the thread of my ideas, then, and continue to write as I always have, like an isolated Being who neither desires nor fears anything from anyone, who speaks to others for their sakes rather than for his own, like a man too fond of his brethren not to hate their vices, and who would like them to learn for once to see themselves as wicked as they are, so that they might at least wish to become as good as they could be.

[4] I know very well that the trouble I go to is useless, and my exhortations do not give me the chimerical pleasure of hoping for men's reformation: I know that they will ridicule my person because I love them, and my maxims because they profit them: I know that they will be no less eager for Glory and money after I have convinced them that these two passions are the sources of all their ills, and that they are wicked because of the one and miserable because of the other: I am sure that they will tax as folly my scorn for these objects of their admiration and labors: But I would rather be the butt of their ridicule than a party to their errors, and regardless of what may be their duty, mine is to tell them the truth or what I take to be the truth; a more powerful voice will have to make them love it.

[5] I have quietly borne the invectives from a host of authors to whom I have never done any other harm than to exhort them to be good men. They have had their amusement at my expense unhindered; they have made me out as ridiculous as they pleased; they have publicly lashed out at my writings and even at my person without my ever having been tempted to repulse their excesses otherwise than by my conduct. If I had deserved them, then the only way I could have taken my revenge would have been to try to reply in kind, whereas I am so far from enjoying this hateful war that the more truths I would have found to tell them, the more it would have saddened my heart. If I do not deserve their insults, then they have leveled them exclusively at themselves: Perhaps their rancor will not even have the effect on the Public which they had hoped for and which does not in the least concern me; extreme passion is often inept and alerts one to be mistrustful of it. Perhaps their own writings shall cause the public to judge me better than I am in fact, [especially] once it realizes that for all their eagerness to blacken me, the greatest crime they could find to [*105*] hold against me is that I let a famous artist paint my portrait.

[6] I find it much more difficult to maintain the same Equanimity toward those who leave my person out of account, and more or less adroitly attack the truths I have established. This sad and great System, the product of a sincere study of man's nature, of his faculties and of his destination, is dear to me, in spite of the fact that it humbles me; for I am sensible to how important it is that pride not deceive us regarding what ought to make for our genuine great-

ness, and how much it is to be feared that by dint of trying to raise ourselves above our nature, we may relapse beneath it. In any case it is useful for men, if not to know the truth, at least not to be in error, and it is an error, the most dangerous of all, to fear error less than ignorance and to prefer, when forced to choose, to be vicious and miserable than poor and crude.

[7] My sentiment has been hotly contested by a host of Writers, as I had anticipated that it would be; up to now I have replied to all those who seemed to me worth the trouble; and I am determined to do the same in the future, not for the sake of my own glory, for it is not J. J. Rousseau I wish to defend; he must have erred frequently: whenever he will seem to me to do so I will abandon him without scruple, and without sorrow, even if he should be in the right, provided only his person is at issue. So that as long as I am only reproached with having published bad books, or reasoning badly, or committing mistakes of usage, or historical errors, or writing hadly, or being ill-humored, I will not greatly mind all these reproaches, I will not be surprised by them, and I will never reply to them. But as for the System I have upheld, I will defend it with all my strength as long as I remain convinced that it is the system of truth and of virtue, and that it is for having ill-advisedly abandoned it that most men, degenerated from their primitive goodness, have lapsed into all the errors that blind them and all the miseries that oppress them.

[8] With so many interests to combat, so many prejudices to overcome and so many harsh things to proclaim, I thought that in my Readers' own interest I should, as it were, make some allowance [*106*] for their pusillanimity, and only successively let them perceive what I had to tell them. If the mere Dijon Discourse aroused so much grumbling and caused such scandal, what would have happened if I had, from the first, unfolded the full extent of a true but distressing System, of which the question dealt with in that Discourse is but a Corollary? I, who am the declared enemy of the violence of the wicked, wonld, at the very least, have been taken for an enemy of the public peace, and if the zealots of the opposing party had not charitably labored to ruin me for [the sake of] the greater glory of philosophy, but had set out to do so to an unknown, there can be no doubt that they would at the very least have easily succeeded in making both the work and the author appear

ridiculous, and if they had begun by making fun of my System, this procedure, made respectable by so many instances of it, would have spared them the troublesome effort of examining my proofs.

[9] I therefore had to take some precautions at first, and I did not want to say everything in order to make sure that everything got a hearing. I developed my ideas only successively and always to but a small number of Readers. I spared not myself, but the truth, in order to have it get through more readily and to make it more useful. Often I went to great trouble to try and condense into a single Sentence, a single line, a single word tossed off as if by chance, the result of a long chain of reflections. The majority of my Readers must often have found my discourses poorly structured and almost entirely disjointed, for want of perceiving the trunk of which I showed them only the branches. But that was enough for those capable of understanding, and I never wanted to speak to the others.

[10] This method put me in a position of frequently having to reply to my adversaries, either in order to meet objections, or to expand and elucidate ideas that required it, or to develop fully all the parts of my System in proportion as the approbation of the Wise secured me the attention of the public. I did, it is true, believe I had attended to all these matters adequately with my earlier replies, at least in so far as the Readers I had in mind were concerned: But as I see from the Lyon Academician's second Discourse that he has still not understood me, I prefer to accuse myself of ineptness [*102*] than him of a lack of goodwill. I will therefore try to state my position better, and since the time has come to speak openly, I will overcome my distaste and for once write for the People.

[11] The work I propose to examine is full of pleasant sophisms that are even more sparkling than subtle, and which, because they seduce with a certain vividness of style and the cunnings of a crafty logic, are doubly dangerous to the multitude. I will follow the very opposite procedure in this analysis, and, by following the Author's arguments step by step as accurately as I can, I will, in this discussion, rely exclusively on the directness and the zeal of a friend of the truth and of humanity, who seeks glory solely in honoring the one, and happiness solely in being useful to the other.

A Jean Jaques Rousseau

DISCOURS

Donné par J. J. Rousseau lui même

SUR L'ORIGINE ET LES FONDEMENS

DE L'INEGALITÉ PARMI LES HOMMES.

a Richd Davenport 1766.

Par JEAN JAQUES ROUSSEAU

CITOYEN DE GENÈVE.

Non in depravatis, sed in his quæ bene secundum naturam se habent, considerandum est quid sit naturale. ARISTOT. Politic. L. 2.



A AMSTERDAM,

Chez MARC MICHEL REY.

M D C C L V.



Il retourne chés ses Egaux

He returns to his equals; see note p. 220.

Discourse

on
The Origin
and the
Foundations of Inequality Among Men

By
Jean Jacques Rousseau
Citizen of Geneva

What is natural has to be investigated not
in beings that are depraved, but in
those that are good according to nature.
Aristot[le]. Politic[s] Bk. 2

Amsterdam
Marc Michel Rey

MDCCLV

To the Republic of Geneva

MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED, AND SOVEREIGN LORDS,

[1] Convinced that only the virtuous Citizen may fittingly present to his Fatherland honors it may acknowledge, I have for thirty years been working to deserve to offer you some public homage; and this happy occasion partly making up for what my efforts have not been able to do, I believed that I might here be permitted to heed the zeal which animates me more than right which should authorize me. Having had the good fortune to be born among you, how could I *meditate* about the equality nature established among men and the inequality they have instituted, without thinking about the profound wisdom with which both, happily combined in this State, contribute in the manner most closely approximating natural law and most favorable to society, to the preservation of public order and to the happiness of individuals? In looking for the best maxims which good sense might dictate regarding the constitution of a government, I was so struck to see them all implemented in yours that, even if I had not been born within your walls, I would have believed myself unable to refrain from offering this picture of human society to the one People which seems to me to possess its greatest advantages and to have best forestalled its abuses.

[2] If I had had to choose my place of birth, I should have chosen a society of a size confined to the range of human faculties, that is to say to the possibility [*112*] of being well governed, and where, everyone being equal to his task, no one would have been compelled to commit to others the functions with which he was himself entrusted: a State where, since all individuals know one another, neither the shady stratagems of vice nor the modesty of virtue could have escaped the Public's gaze and judgment, and where this gentle habit of seeing and knowing one another would have made the love of one's Fatherland a love of the Citizens rather than of the soil.

[3] I should have wished to be born in a country where the Sovereign and the people could have had only one and the same interest,

so that all the motions of the machine might always tend only to the common happiness; since this is impossible unless the People and the Sovereign are the same person, it follows that I should have wished to be born under a democratic government wisely tempered.

[4] I should have wished to live and die free, that is to say so far subject to the laws that neither I nor anyone else could shake off their honorable yoke; the salutary and gentle yoke which the proudest heads bear with all the more docility as they are made to bear none other.

[5] I should have wished, then, that no one inside the State could have declared himself to be above the law, and No one outside it could have imposed any [law] which the State was obliged to recognize. For, regardless of how a government is constituted, if there is a single person in it who is not subject to the law, all the others are necessarily at his discretion (I);[1] and if there is one national Chief, and another foreign Chief, then regardless of the division of authority they may establish, it is impossible that both be obeyed well and the State well governed.

[6] I should not have wished to live in a newly established Republic, regardless of how good its laws might be, for fear that, if the government were perhaps constituted differently than it should have been under the circumstances, either by being ill-suited to the new Citizens or by the Citizens' being ill-suited to the new government, the State might be liable to be upset and destroyed almost from birth. For freedom is like the solid and hearty foods or the full-bodied wines fit to feed and fortify robust temperaments used to them, but [*113*] which overwhelm, ruin and intoxicate weak and delicate ones that are not up to them. Once Peoples are accustomed to Masters, they can no longer do without them. If they attempt to shake off the yoke, they move all the farther away from freedom because, as they mistake unbridled license for freedom, which is its very opposite, their revolutions almost always deliver them up to seducers who only increase their chains. Even the Roman People, that model of all free Peoples, could not govern itself on emerging from the Tarquins' oppression. Degraded by the slavery and the ignominious labors the Tarquins had imposed on it, it was at first

[1] [Rousseau's end-notes, numbered I through XIX, begin on p. 189; an editorial note about their numbering will be found on p. 370.]

but a stupid Populace that had to be handled with care and governed with the utmost wisdom; so that these souls, enervated, or rather numbed under the tyranny, as they little by little grew accustomed to breathe the salutary air of freedom, might gradually acquire that severity of morals and that proud courage which eventually made of them the most respectable of all Peoples. I should, then, have sought out as my Fatherland a happy and quiet Republic of an antiquity that lost itself, as it were, in the night of the ages; which had been subject only to such attacks as are apt to stimulate and to strengthen its inhabitants' courage and love of Fatherland, and whose Citizens, accustomed by long experience to a wise independence, not only were free, but were worthy of being so.

[7] I should have wished to choose a Fatherland diverted from the ferocious love of Conquest by a fortunate powerlessness, and protected against the fear of itself becoming the Conquest of some other State by an even more fortunate location: A free City, situated amidst a number of Peoples none of which had any interest in invading it, but each of which had an interest in preventing the others from invading it: In a word, a Republic which did not tempt the ambition of its neighbors, and might reasonably count on their help in case of need. It follows that, being so fortunately located, it would have had nothing to fear but from itself alone; and that if its Citizens had military training, it would have been more in order to keep alive in them that martial spirit and proud courage which so becomes freedom and maintains the taste for it, than from the necessity to provide for their own defense.

[8] I should have sought out a Country where the right of legislation [*114*] was common to all Citizens; for who could know better than they the conditions under which it suits them to live together in one society? But I should not have approved of Plebiscites like those of the Romans, where the Chiefs of the State and those most interested in its preservation were excluded from the deliberations on which its security often depended, and where, by an absurd inconsistency, the Magistrates were deprived of rights enjoyed by ordinary Citizens.

[9] On the contrary, in order to forestall the self-seeking and ill-conceived projects and the dangerous innovations which finally ruined the Athenians, I should have wished that not everyone have the power to propose new Laws according to his fancy; that this

right belong to the Magistrates alone; even that they exercise it so circumspectly that the People, for its part, be so guarded in granting its consent to these Laws, and that their promulgation require so much solemnity that, before the constitution became unstable, there had been time to realize that it is above all the great antiquity of the Laws that renders them sacred and venerable, that the People soon scorn those they see change every day, and that, by getting used to neglecting ancient ways on the pretext of doing better, great evils are often introduced to correct lesser ones.

[10] I should above all have fled as necessarily ill-governed a Republic where the People, believing it could do without its Magistrates or leave them no more than a precarious authority, had imprudently retained in its own hands the administration of Civil affairs and the execution of its own Laws; such must have been the rude constitution of the first governments arising immediately from the state of Nature, and it still was one of the Vices that ruined the Republic of Athens.

[11] Rather, I should have chosen one where private persons, content to ratify the Laws and decide the most important public business in a Body and on the recommendation of the Chiefs, established respected tribunals, carefully distinguished their various functions, yearly elected the most capable and the most upright among their Fellow-Citizens to administer Justice and govern the State; and where the Virtue of the Magistrates thus bearing witness to the wisdom of the People, [*115*] each would do the other honor. So that if ever fatal misunderstandings arose to disturb the public harmony, even those times of blindness and errors might be marked by evidence of moderation, mutual esteem, and a shared respect for the Laws; harbingers and guarantees of a sincere and everlasting reconciliation.

[12] Such, MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED AND SOVEREIGN LORDS, are the advantages I should have sought in the Fatherland I would have chosen. If, to these, providence had added a lovely location, a temperate Climate, a fertile soil, and the most delightful vistas under Heaven, I should only have wished, in order to complete my happiness, to enjoy all of these goods in the bosom of this happy Fatherland, living peacefully in the sweet society of my Fellow-Citizens, practicing toward them, and at their example, humanity, friendship, and all the virtues, and leaving behind the

honorable memory of a good man and an honest and virtuous Patriot.

[13] If, less happy or too late grown wise, I saw myself reduced to ending a lame and languishing career in other Climes, in vain regretting the quiet and the Peace of which a youthful want of prudence would have deprived me; I would at least have fostered in my soul these same sentiments which I could not put to use in my country, and, imbued with tender and selfless affection for my distant Fellow-Citizens, I would from the bottom of my heart have addressed to them approximately the following discourse.

[14] My dear Fellow-Citizens or rather my brothers, since ties of blood as well as the Laws unite almost all of us, it pleases me that I cannot think of you without at the same time thinking of all the goods you enjoy and of which perhaps none of you feels the value better than I who have lost them. The more I reflect on your Political and Civil situation, the less can I imagine that the nature of human things could admit of a better. In all other Governments, when it is a question of providing for the greatest good of the State, everything is always restricted to ideas for projects, and at most to mere possibilities. For you, your happiness is complete, you have only to enjoy it; and all you need in order to become perfectly happy is [*116*] to know how to be content with being so. Your Sovereignty, acquired or recovered at sword's point, and maintained for two centuries by dint of valor and wisdom, is at last fully and universally recognized. Honorable Treaties fix your boundaries, insure your rights, and confirm your security. Your constitution is excellent, dictated by the most sublime reason and guaranteed by friendly and respectable Powers; your State enjoys tranquility, you have neither wars nor conquerors to fear; you have no other masters than wise laws, made by yourselves, administered by upright Magistrates of your own choosing; you are neither so rich as to become enervated by softness and lose the taste for true happiness and solid virtues in vain delights, nor so poor as to need more foreign assistance than your industry provides; and it costs you almost nothing to preserve the precious freedom which great Nations can maintain only by means of exorbitant Taxes.

[15] May a Republic so wisely and so happily constituted last forever, both for its Citizens' happiness, and as an example to all Peoples! This is the only wish it remains for you to make, and the only care it remains for you to take. Henceforth it is up to your-

selves alone not, indeed, to provide for your happiness, your Ancestors have spared you that trouble, but to make it long-lasting by the wisdom of using it well. Your preservation depends on your everlasting union, your obedience to the laws, your respect for their Ministers. If there remains among you the least germ of bitterness or mistrust, hasten to destroy it as a fatal leaven which would sooner or later bring about your miseries and the State's ruin: I implore all of you to return to the depths of your Heart and consult the secret voice of your conscience: Does anyone of you know anywhere in the universe a more upright, more enlightened, or more respectable Body than your Magistrature? Do not all of its members offer you an example of moderation, of simplicity of morals, of respect for the laws, and of the most sincere reconciliation? then grant without reservations to these wise Chiefs the salutary trust which reason owes to virtue; remember that you have chosen them, that they justify your choice, and that the honors owed to those whom you have [*117*] made dignitaries necessarily redound upon yourselves. None of you is so unenlightened as not to know that where the laws lose their vigor and its defenders their authority there can be neither security nor freedom for anyone. What else, then, is at issue between you, than that you do wholeheartedly and with justified confidence what you would in any event have to do out of true interest, duty, and reason? May a guilty and fatal indifference to the preservation of the constitution never cause you to neglect in times of need the wise opinions of the most enlightened and zealous among you: Rather, may equity, moderation, and the most respectful firmness continue to regulate all your undertakings and through you exhibit to the entire universe the example of a proud and modest People as jealous of its glory as of its freedom. Above all, and this will be my last Advice, beware of ever heeding sinister interpretations and venomous discourses, the secret motives of which are often more dangerous than are the actions they are about. An entire household is awake and on the lookout at the first calls of a good and loyal Guardian who barks only when Thieves draw near; but people hate the importuning of the noisy animals that continually disturb the public repose, and their constant and misplaced warnings are not heeded even in time of need.

[16] And you, MAGNIFICENT AND MOST HONORED LORDS, you worthy and respectable Magistrates of a free People; allow me to offer my homage and respects to you in particular. If there is in

the world a rank suited to confer distinction on those who occupy it, it is without a doubt the rank bestowed by talents and virtue, the rank of which you have proved yourselves worthy, and to which your Fellow-Citizens have raised you. Their own merit adds further luster to yours, and I find that for having been chosen to govern them by men capable of governing others, you are as much superior to all other Magistrates as a free People, and particularly the free people you have the honor of leading, is, by its enlightenment and reason, superior to the populace of other States.

[17] Allow me to cite an example of which there should be better records, and which will always be present to my Heart. I never recall without the [*118*] sweetest emotion the memory of the virtuous Citizen to whom I owe my life, and who often throughout my childhood impressed on me the respect due you. I see him still, living off the work of his hands, and nourishing his soul with the most sublime Truths. I see Tacitus, Plutarch, and Grotius before him amidst the tools of his trade. I see at his side a beloved son receiving with too little profit the tender teachings of the best of Fathers. But if the excesses of a foolish youth caused me to forget such wise lessons for a time, I have the happiness of at last experiencing that, whatever may be one's inclination to vice, an education in which the heart has a share is unlikely to be lost forever.

[18] Such are, MAGNIFICENT AND MOST HONORED LORDS, the Citizens and even the mere residents born in the State you govern; such are the educated and sensible men about whom they have such low and false ideas in other Nations, where they are called Workers and the People. My Father, I gladly admit it, was not outstanding among his fellow-citizens; he was but what they all are, and, such as he was, there is no Country where his society would not have been sought after, cultivated, and even profitably so, by the most honest people. It is not for me, and thank Heaven it is not necessary, to tell you how much regard men of such mettle can expect from you, your equals by education as well as by the rights of nature and of birth; your inferiors by their own will, by the preference which they owe to your merit, which they have granted to it, and for which you, in turn, owe them a kind of gratitude. I learn with lively satisfaction how much you, in your dealings with them, temper the gravity behooving the ministers of the Laws with gentleness and condescension; how much you reciprocate in esteem and

attentions what they owe you by way of obedience and respect; conduct full of justice and of wisdom that is appropriate for putting increasingly far behind the memory of the unhappy events which must be forgotten if they are never to recur: conduct all the more judicious as this equitable and generous People makes its duty a pleasure, as it naturally loves to honor you, and as those who are most intent on upholding their rights are the ones who are most inclined to respect yours. [*119*]

[19] It should not be surprising that the Chiefs of a Civil Society love its glory and happiness, but it is altogether too surprising for men's peace of mind that those who look upon themselves as the Magistrates, or rather as the masters of a Fatherland more holy and more sublime, should exhibit any love for the earthly Fatherland that sustains them. How pleased I am to be able to make such a rare exception in our favor, and to rank among our best citizens those zealous trustees of the sacred dogmas authorized by the laws, those venerable Pastors of souls whose lively and sweet eloquence all the better conveys the maxims of the Gospel into men's Hearts because they are themselves always the first to practice them! Everybody knows how successfully the great art of the Pulpit is cultivated in Geneva; But since they are all too accustomed to see things said one way and done another, few People know the extent to which the spirit of Christianity, holiness of morals, severity toward oneself and gentleness toward others prevail in the Body of our Ministers. Perhaps only the City of Geneva can offer the edifying example of such a perfect union between a Society of Theologians and of Men of Letters. It is in large measure on their acknowledged wisdom and moderation, it is on their zeal for the State's prosperity that I base the hope for its eternal tranquility; and I note with a mixture of pleasure, surprise, and respect how much they abhor the frightful maxims of those holy and barbarous men of whom History provides more than one example and who, in order to uphold the supposed rights of God, that is to say their own interest, were all the less sparing of human blood as they flattered themselves that their own would always be respected.

[20] Could I forget that precious half of the Republic which causes the other's happiness, and whose gentleness and wisdom preserve its peace and good morals? Amiable and virtuous Citizen-women, it will always be the lot of your sex to govern ours. How

fortunate when your chaste power, exercised in conjugal union alone, makes itself felt solely for the State's glory and the public happiness: This is how women commanded in Sparta, and this is how you deserve to command in Geneva. What man would be so barbarous [*120*] as to resist the voice of honor and reason from the mouth of a tender wife; and who would not despise vain luxury upon seeing your simple and modest attire which, by the radiance it owes to you, seems to complement beauty most? It is up to you, by your amiable and innocent dominion and your ingratiating wit, always to preserve the love of the laws in the State and Concord among the Citizens; by happy marriages to reunite divided families; and above all, by the persuasive gentleness of your lessons and the modest graciousness of your conversation, to correct the misconceptions our young Men acquire in other countries from which, instead of the many useful things that could profit them, they only bring back, together with a childish tone and ridiculous airs adopted among lost women, an admiration for I know not what supposed grandeurs, the frivolous compensations for servitude, that will never be worth as much as august freedom. Therefore always be what you are, the chaste guardians of morals and the gentle bonds of peace, and continue at every opportunity to assert the rights of the Heart and of Nature on behalf of duty and of virtue.

[21] I flatter myself that the event will not prove me wrong, when I base the hope for the Citizens' common happiness and the Republic's glory on such guarantors. I admit that, for all of these advantages, it will not shine with the brilliance that dazzles most eyes, and a childish and fatal taste for which is the deadliest enemy of happiness and of freedom. Let dissolute youths go elsewhere in search of easy pleasures and lasting remorse: Let supposed men of taste admire elsewhere the grandeur of Palaces, the beauty of carriages, the sumptuous furnishings, the pomp of spectacles, and all the refinements of softness and luxury. In Geneva will be found only men, yet such a spectacle has its own value, and those who will seek it out will certainly be worth as much as those who admire the rest.

[22] Deign, MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED AND SOVEREIGN LORDS, to accept, all of you with equal goodness, the respectful testimonies of the interest I take in your common prosperity. If I had the misfortune of being guilty of some indiscreet transport in this lively

outpouring of my Heart, I beseech you to pardon it as due to the tender affection of a [*121*] true Patriot, and the ardent and legitimate zeal of a man who envisions no greater happiness for himself than that of seeing all of you happy.

I am with the deepest respect

MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED
AND SOVEREIGN LORDS,

Your most humble and most obedient servant and Fellow-Citizen

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

At Chambéry, 12 June 1754

[*122*]

PREFACE

[1] The most useful and the least advanced of all human knowledge seems to me to be that of man (II), and I dare say that the inscription on the Temple at Delphi alone contained a more important and more difficult Precept than all the big Books of the Moralists. I therefore consider the subject of this Discourse to be one of the most interesting questions Philosophy might raise, and unfortunately for us one of the thorniest Philosophers might have to resolve: For how can the source of inequality among men be known unless one begins by knowing men themselves? and how will man ever succeed in seeing himself as Nature formed him, through all the changes which the succession of times and of things must have wrought in his original constitution, and to disentangle what he owes to his own stock from what circumstances and his progress have added to or changed in his primitive state? like the statue of Glaucus which time, sea, and storms had so disfigured that it less resembled a God than a ferocious Beast, the human soul altered in the lap of society by a thousand forever recurring causes, by the acquisition of a mass of knowledge and errors, by the changes that have taken place in the constitution of Bodies, and by the continual impact of the passions, has, so to speak, changed in appearance to the point of being almost unrecognizable; and instead of a being always acting on certain and unvarying Principles, instead of the Celestial and majestic simplicity its Author had imprinted on it, all one still finds is the deformed contrast of passion that believes it reasons and the understanding that hallucinates.

[2] What is more cruel still, is that, since every progress of the human Species removes it ever farther from [*123*] its primitive state, the more new knowledge we accumulate, the more we deprive ourselves of the means of acquiring the most important knowledge of all, and that in a sense it is by dint of studying man that we have made it impossible for us to know him.

[3] It is easy to see that it is in these successive changes of man's constitution that one must seek the first origin of the differences that distinguish men who, by common consent, are naturally as equal among themselves as were the animals of every species, before various Physical causes introduced in some species the varieties which we

observe among them. Indeed, it is not conceivable that these first changes, however they may have come about, altered all the Individuals of the species at once and in the same way; rather, while some were perfected or deteriorated and acquired various good or bad qualities that were not inherent in their Nature, the others remained in their original state for a longer time; and such was, among men, the first source of inequality, which it is easier to establish thus in general, than it is to assign its genuine causes with precision.

[4] Let my Readers therefore not imagine that I dare flatter myself with having seen what seems to me so difficult to see. I have initiated some arguments; I have hazarded some conjectures, less in the hope of resolving the question than with the intention of elucidating it and reducing it to its genuine state. Others will easily be able to go farther along the same road, though it will not be easy for anyone to reach the end. For it is no light undertaking to disentangle what is original from what is artificial in man's present Nature, and to know accurately a state which no longer exists, which perhaps never did exist, which probably never will exist, and about which it is nevertheless necessary to have exact Notions in order accurately to judge of our present state. Whoever might undertake to ascertain exactly the precautions required to make solid observations on this subject would need even more Philosophy than one might suspect; and a good solution of the following Problem does not seem to me unworthy of the Aristotles and the Plinys of our century: *What experiments would be needed in order to come [124] to know natural man; and by what means can these experiments be performed within society?* Far from undertaking to solve this Problem, I believe that I have meditated upon the Subject sufficiently to dare answer in advance that the greatest Philosophers will not be too good to direct these experiments, nor the most powerful sovereigns to perform them; a collaboration which it is scarcely reasonable to expect, especially in conjunction with the sustained or rather the successive enlightenment and goodwill needed by both parties in order to succeed.

[5] Yet these investigations so difficult to carry out, and to which so little thought has so far been devoted, are the only means we have left to resolve a host of difficulties that deprive us of the knowledge of the real foundations of human society. It is this ignorance of the nature of man that casts such uncertainty and obscurity on the genuine definition of natural right: for the idea of right, says

M. Burlamaqui, and still more that of natural right, are manifestly ideas relative to the Nature of man. Hence, he goes on, it is from this very Nature of man, from his constitution and his state, that the principles of this science have to be be deduced.

[6] It is not without surprise and scandal that one notes how little agreement prevails about this important matter among the various Authors who have dealt with it. Among the most serious Writers, scarcely two can be found who are of the same opinion on this point. To say nothing of the Ancient Philosophers who seem deliberately to have set out to contradict one another on the most fundamental principles, the Roman Jurists indiscriminately subject man and all other animals to the same natural Law, because they consider under this name the Law which Nature imposes upon itself, rather than that which it prescribes; or rather, because of the particular sense in which these Jurists understand the word Law, which they seem on this occasion to have taken only for the expression of the general relations established by nature among all animate beings, for their common preservation. The Moderns, since they allow the name of Law only for a rule prescribed to a moral being, that is to say to a being that is intelligent, free, and considered in its relations with other beings, restrict the province of natural Law to the only animal endowed with reason, that is to say to man; [*125*] but while each one of them defines this Law in his own fashion, all of them base it on such metaphysical principles that even among us there are very few people capable of understanding these principles, let alone of discovering them on their own. So that all the definitions by these learned men, which in every other respect are in constant contradiction with one another, agree only in this, that it is impossible to understand the Law of Nature and hence to obey it without being a very great reasoner and a profound Metaphysician. Which precisely means that in order to establish society men must have employed an enlightenment which develops only with much difficulty and among very few people within society itself.

[7] Knowing Nature so little, and agreeing so poorly about the meaning of the word *Law*, it would be most difficult to agree on a good definition of natural Law. Indeed, all those that are found in Books, besides not being uniform, suffer from the further defect of being derived from a range of Knowledge which men do not naturally have, and from advantages the idea of which they can con-

ceive of only once they have left the state of Nature. One begins by looking for the rules about which it would be appropriate for men to agree among themselves for the sake of the common utility; and then gives the name natural Law to the collection of these rules, with no further proof than the good which, in one's view, would result from universal compliance with them. That is certainly a very convenient way of framing definitions, and of explaining the nature of things by almost arbitrary conformities.

[8] But so long as we do not know natural man, we shall in vain try to ascertain either the Law which he has received or that which best suits his constitution. All we can very clearly see about this Law is not only that for it to be law the will of him whom it obligates must be able to submit to it knowingly; But also that for it to be natural it must speak immediately with the voice of Nature.

[9] Hence disregarding all the scientific books that only teach us to see men as they have made themselves, and meditating on the first and simplest operations of the human Soul, I believe I perceive in it two [*126*] principles prior to reason, of which one interests us intensely in our well-being and our self-preservation, and the other inspires in us a natural repugnance to seeing any sentient Being, and especially any being like ourselves, perish or suffer. It is from the cooperation and from the combination our mind is capable of making between these two Principles, without it being necessary to introduce into it that of sociability, that all the rules of natural right seem to me to flow; rules which reason is subsequently forced to reestablish on other foundations, when by its successive developments it has succeeded in stifling Nature.

[10] This way one is not obliged to make a Philosopher of man before making a man of him; his duties toward others are not dictated to him exclusively by the belated lessons of Wisdom; and as long as he does not resist the internal impulsion of commiseration, he will never harm another man or even any sentient being, except in the legitimate case when, his preservation being involved, he is obliged to give himself preference. By this means the ancient disputes about whether animals participate in the natural Law are also brought to an end: For it is clear that, since they are deprived of enlightenment and of freedom, they cannot recognize that Law; but since they in some measure partake in our nature through the sentience with which they ar , endowed, it will be concluded that

they must also participate in natural right, and that man is subject to some kind of duties toward them. Indeed, it would seem that if I am obliged not to harm another being like myself, this is so less because it is a rational being than because it is a sentient being; a quality which, since it is common to beast and man, must at least give the beast the right not to be needlessly maltreated by man.

[11] This same study of original man, of his true needs, and of the fundamental principles of his duties is also the only effective means available to dispel the host of difficulties that arise regarding the origin of moral inequality, the true foundations of the Body politic, the reciprocal rights of its members, and a thousand similar questions, as important as they are badly elucidated.

[12] Human society viewed with a calm [*127*] and disinterested gaze seems at first to exhibit only the violence of powerful men and the oppression of the weak; the mind rebels at the harshness of the first; one is inclined to deplore the blindness of the others; and since nothing is less stable among men than those external relationships that are more often the product of chance than of wisdom, and that are called weakness or power, wealth or poverty, human establishments seem at first glance to be founded on piles of Quicksand; it is only by examining them closely, only after setting aside the dust and sand that surround the Edifice, that one perceives the unshakable base on which it is raised, and learns to respect its foundations. Now, without the serious study of man, of his natural faculties, and of their successive developments, one will never succeed in drawing these distinctions and in separating what, in the present constitution of things, divine will has done from what human art has pretended to do. The Political and moral investigations occasioned by the important question I am examining are therefore in every way useful, and the hypothetical history of governments is in all respects an instructive lesson for man. By considering what we would have become, abandoned to ourselves, we must learn to bless him whose beneficent hand, correcting our institutions and grounding them unshakably, forestalled the disorders that would have resulted from them, and caused our happiness to be born from the very means that seemed bound to complete our misery.

Learn what the god ordered you to be,
And what your place is in the human world.

[128]

Notice about the Notes

I have added some notes to this work after my lazy practice of working in fits and starts. These notes sometimes stray so wide of the subject that they are not good to read together with the text. I therefore cast them to the end of the Discourse, in which I tried my best to follow the straightest road. Those who will have the courage to start over again can amuse themselves the second time with beating the bushes, and trying to peruse the notes; there will be little harm in the others' not reading them at all.

Question

Proposed by the Academy of Dijon

What is the origin of inequality among
men, and whether it is authorized
by the natural Law.

Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men

[1] It is of man that I am to speak, and the question I examine tells me that I shall be speaking to men, for one does not propose such questions if one is afraid of honoring the truth. I shall therefore confidently uphold the cause of humanity before the wise men who invite me to do so, and I shall not be dissatisfied with myself if I prove worthy of my subject and my judges.

[2] I conceive of two sorts of inequality in the human Species; one which I call natural or Physical, because it is established by Nature, and which consists in the differences in age, health, strengths of Body, and qualities of Mind, or of Soul; The other, which may be called moral, or political inequality, because it depends on a sort of convention, and is established, or at least authorized by Men's consent. It consists in the different Privileges which some enjoy to the prejudice of the others, such as to be more wealthy, more honored, more Powerful than they, or even to get themselves obeyed by them.

[3] It makes no sense to ask what the source of Natural inequality is, because the answer would be given by the simple definition of the word: Still less does it make sense to inquire whether there might not be some essential connection between the two inequalities; for that would be to ask in different terms whether those who command are necessarily better than those who obey, and whether strength of Body or of Mind, wisdom or virtue, [*132*] are always found in the same individuals, in proportion to their Power, or their Wealth: A question which it may perhaps be good for Slaves to debate within hearing of their Masters, but not befitting rational and free Men who seek the truth.

[4] What, then, precisely is at issue in this Discourse? To mark, in the progress of things, the moment when, Right replacing Violence, Nature was subjected to Law; to explain by what chain of wonders the strong could resolve to serve the weak, and the People to purchase an idea of repose at the price of real felicity.

[5] The Philosophers who have examined the foundations of society have all felt the necessity of going back as far as the state of Nature, but none of them has reached it. Some have not hesitated to ascribe to Man in that state the notion of the Just and the Unjust, without bothering to show that he had to have this notion, or even that it would have been useful to him; Others have spoken of everyone's Natural Right to keep what belongs to him, without explaining what they understood by belong; Others still, after first granting to the stronger authority over the weaker, had Government arise straightway, without giving thought to the time that must have elapsed before the language of authority and of government could have meaning among Men: Finally, all of them, continually speaking of need, greed, oppression, desires, and pride transferred to the state of Nature ideas they had taken from society; They spoke of Savage Man and depicted Civil man. It did not even enter the mind of most of our philosophers to doubt that the state of Nature had existed whereas it is evident, from reading the Holy Scriptures, that the first Man having received some lights and Precepts immediately from God was not himself in that state, and that, if the Writings of Moses are granted the credence owed them by every Christian Philosopher, it has to be denied that, even before the Flood, Men were ever in the pure state of Nature, unless they relapsed into it by some extraordinary Occurrence: a Paradox most embarrassing to defend, and altogether impossible to prove.

[6] Let us therefore begin by setting aside all the facts, for they do not affect the question. [*133*] The Inquiries that may be pursued regarding this Subject ought not be taken for historical truths, but only for hypothetical and conditional reasonings; better suited to elucidate the Nature of things than to show their genuine origin, and comparable to those our Physicists daily make regarding the formation of the World. Religion commands us to believe that since God himself drew Men out of the state of Nature immediately after the creation, they are unequal because he wanted them to be so; but it does not forbid us to form conjectures based solely on the nature of man and of the Beings that surround him, about what Mankind might have become if it had remained abandoned to itself. This is what I am asked, and what I propose to examine in this Discourse. Since my subject concerns man in general, I shall try to speak in a language suited to all Nations, or rather, forgetting

times and Places, in order to think only about the Men to whom I am speaking, I shall suppose myself in the Lyceum of Athens, repeating the Lessons of my Masters, with the likes of Plato and of Xenocrates as my Judges, and Mankind as my Audience.

[7] O Man, whatever Land you may be from, whatever may be your opinions, listen; Here is your history such as I believed I read it, not in the Books by your kind, who are liars, but in Nature, which never lies. Everything that will have come from it, will be true: Nothing will be false but what I will unintentionally have introduced of my own. The times of which I will speak are very remote: How much you have changed from what you were! It is, so to speak, the life of your species that I will describe to you in terms of the qualities you received, which your education and your habits could deprave, but which they could not destroy. There is, I sense, an age at which the individual human being would want to stop; You will look for the age at which you would wish your Species had stopped. Discontented with your present state, for reasons that herald even greater discontents for your unhappy Posterity, you might perhaps wish to be able to go backward; And this sentiment must serve as the Praise of your earliest forbears, the criticism of your contemporaries, and the dread of those who will have the misfortune to live after you.

Part I

[1] However important it may be, in order to judge soundly regarding Man's natural state, to consider him from his origin, and to examine him, so to speak, in the first Embryo of the species, I shall not follow his organization throughout its successive developments: I shall not pause to search in the animal System what he may have been at the beginning, if he was eventually to become what he now is; I shall not examine whether, as Aristotle thinks, his elongated nails were at first hooked claws; whether he was as hairy as a bear and whether, walking on all fours, (III) his gaze directed to the Earth, and confined to a horizon of a few paces, determined both the character and the limits of his ideas. I could form only vague and almost imaginary conjectures on this subject: Comparative Anatomy has as yet made too little progress, the observations of Naturalists are as yet too uncertain to permit establishing the basis of a solid argument on such foundations; so that, without resorting to the supernatural knowledge we have on this point, and without taking into account the changes that must have occurred in man's internal and the external conformation, as he gradually put his limbs to new uses, and took up new foods, I shall assume him always conformed as I see him today, walking on two feet, using his hands as we do ours, directing his gaze over the whole of Nature, and with his eyes surveying the vast expanse of Heaven.

[2] By stripping this Being, so constituted, of all the supernatural gifts he may have received, and of all the artificial faculties he could only have acquired by prolonged progress; by considering him, in a word, such as he must have issued from the hands of Nature, I see an animal [*135*] less strong than some, less agile than others, but, all things considered, the most advantageously organized of all: I see him sating his hunger beneath an oak, slaking his thirst at the first Stream, finding his bed at the foot of the same tree that supplied his meal, and with that his needs are satisfied.

[3] The Earth, abandoned to its natural fertility (IV), and covered by immense forests which no Axe ever mutilated, at every step offers Storage and shelter to the animals of every species. Men, dispersed among them, observe, imitate their industry, and so raise themselves to the level of the Beasts' instinct, with this advantage

that each species has but its own instinct, while man perhaps having none that belongs to him, appropriates them all, feeds indifferently on most of the various foods (V) which the other animals divide among themselves, and as a result finds his subsistence more easily than can any one of them.

[4] Accustomed from childhood to the inclemencies of the weather, and the rigor of the seasons, hardened to fatigue, and forced to defend naked and unarmed their life and their Prey against the other ferocious Beasts or to escape them by running, Men develop a robust and almost unalterable temperament; The Children, since they come into the world with their Fathers' excellent constitution and strengthen it by the same activities that produced it, thus acquire all the vigor of which the human species is capable. Nature deals with them exactly as the Law of Sparta did with the Children of Citizens; It makes those who have a good constitution strong and robust, and causes all the others to perish; differing in this from our societies, where the State kills Children indiscriminately before their birth by making them a burden to their Fathers.

[5] Since his body is the only tool which savage man knows, he puts it to various uses of which our bodies are incapable for want of practice, and it is our industry that deprives us of the strength and the agility which necessity obliges him to acquire. If he had had an ax, could his wrist have cracked such solid branches? If he had had a sling, could he have thrown a stone as hard by hand? If he had had a ladder, could he have climbed a tree as nimbly? If he had had a Horse, could he have run as fast? Give civilized man [*136*] the time to gather all his machines around him, there can be no doubt that he will easily overcome Savage man; but if you want to see an even more unequal contest, have them confront each other naked and unarmed, and you will soon recognize the advantage of constantly hzving all one's strengths at one's disposal, of being ever ready for any eventuality and of, so to speak, always carrying all of oneself along with one (VI).

[6] Hobbes contends that man is naturally intrepid, and seeks only to attack, and to fight. An illustrious Philosopher thinks, on the contrary, and Cumberland and Pufendorf also maintain, that nothing is as timid as man in the state of Nature, and that he is forever trembling, and ready to flee at the least noise that strikes him, at the least movement he notices. This may be so with regard

to objects he does not know, and I do not doubt that he is frightened by every new Sight that presents itself to him, whenever he cannot distinguish between the Physical good or evil he can expect from it, nor compare his strength with the dangers he has to outrun; circumstances that are rare in the state of Nature, where everything proceeds in such a uniform fashion, and where the face of the Earth is not subject to the sudden and constant changes caused in it by the passions and the inconstancy of Peoples assembled. But Savage man, living dispersed amongst the animals, and early finding himself in the position of having to measure himself against them, soon makes the comparison and, feeling that he surpasses them in skill more than they do him in strength, learns to fear them no more. Set a bear or a wolf against a sturdy, agile, courageous Savage, as they all are, armed with stones, and a good stick, and you will see that the danger will at the very least be mutual, and that after several such experiences, ferocious Beasts, disinclined as they are to attack one another, will not readily attack man, whom they will have found to be just as ferocious as themselves. As for the animals that really do have more strength than he has skill, he is in the same position with regard to them as are the other weaker species which none the less continue to subsist; with this advantage on man's side that, since he runs just as well as they, and can find almost certain refuge in trees, he has the initiative in any encounter, as well as the choice of [*137*] fleeing or fighting. Let us add that it does not seem that any animal naturally wars against man, except in the case of self-defense or of extreme hunger, or that any bears him those violent antipathies that seem to announce that one species is destined by Nature to serve as fodder for the other.

[7] These are undoubtedly the reasons why Negroes and Savages worry so little about the ferocious beasts they might meet up with in the woods. In this respect the Caribs of Venezuela, among others, live in the most profound security and without the slightest inconvenience. Although they are almost naked, says François Corréal, they do not hesitate boldly to take their chances in the woods, armed only with bow and arrow; yet nobody has ever heard of a single one of them being devoured by beasts.

[8] Other, more formidable, enemies against which man has not the same means of defense are the natural infirmities, childhood, old age, and illnesses of every kind: Melancholy signs of our weak-

ness, of which the first two are common to all animals, and the last belongs primarily to man living in Society. As regards Childhood, I even note that, since the Mother carries her child with her everywhere, she can feed it much more readily than can the female of a number of animals, forced as they are to wear themselves out going back and forth, one way to find their food, the other to suckle or feed their young. It is true that if the woman happens to perish, the child runs a considerable risk of perishing with her; but this danger is common to a hundred other species whose young are for a long time not in a condition to forage for themselves; and while Childhood lasts longer among us, life also does, so that everything remains more or less equal in this respect (VII); although there are other rules regarding the duration of the first period of life and the number of young, (VIII) which do not pertain to my Subject. Among Old people, who act and perspire little, the need for food diminishes together with the capacity to provide for it; And since Savage life keeps gout and rheumatisms from them, and old age is the one of all ills which human assistance can least alleviate, they eventually expire without anyone's noticing that they are ceasing to be, and almost without their noticing it themselves.[*138*]

[9] Regarding illnesses, I shall not repeat the vain and false declamations against Medicine by most healthy people; but I shall ask whether there is any solid evidence to conclude that in Countries where this art is most neglected man's average life span is shorter than in those where it is cultivated with the greatest care; And how could it be, if we inflict upon ourselves more ills than Medicine can provide Remedies! The extreme inequality in ways of life, the excess of idleness among some, the excess of work among others, the ease with which our appetites and our sensuality are aroused and satisfied, the excessively exotic dishes of the rich, which fill them with inflammatory humors and wrack them with indigestions, the bad food of the Poor, which most of the time they do not even have, and the want of which leads them greedily to overtax their stomachs when they get the chance, the late nights, the excesses of every kind, the immoderate transports of all the Passions, the fatigues and exhaustion of the Mind, the innumerable sorrows and pains that are experienced in every station of life and that constantly gnaw away at men's souls; Such are the fatal proofs that most of our ills are of our own making, and that we would have avoided

almost all of them if we had retained the simple, uniform and solitary way of life prescribed to us by Nature. If it destined us to be healthy then, I almost dare assert, the state of reflection is a state against Nature, and the man who meditates is a depraved animal. When one considers the good constitution of Savages, at least of those we have not ruined with our strong liquors, when one realizes that they know almost no other illnesses than wounds and old age, one is strongly inclined to believe that the history of human diseases could easily be written by following that of civil Societies. Such at least is the opinion of Plato who, on the basis of certain Remedies used or approved by Podalirius and Machaon at the siege of Troy, judges that various diseases which these remedies should have brought on were at that time not yet known among men. And Celsus reports that dieting, which is nowadays so necessary, was only invented by Hippocrates. [*139*]

[10] With so few sources of illness, man in the state of Nature has, then, little need for remedies, and even less for Doctors; in this respect too, the human species is no worse off than all the others, and one can easily find out from Hunters whether they come across many unhealthy animals in their treks. They do find some with massive, very well-healed wounds, that had bones and even limbs broken and knit with no other Surgeon than time, no other regimen than their ordinary life, and are no less perfectly cured for not having been tormented by incisions, poisoned by Drugs, or exhausted by fasts. In short, however useful well-administered medicine may be among us, it is in any event certain that while the sick Savage abandoned to himself alone has nothing to hope for but from Nature, in return he has nothing to fear but from his illness, and this often makes his situation preferable to ours.

[11] Let us therefore beware of confusing Savage man with the men we have before our eyes. Nature treats all animals abandoned to its care with a partiality that seems to indicate how jealous it is of this right. The Horse, the Cat, the Bull, even the Ass are, most of them, larger in size, all of them have a sturdier constitution, greater vigor, force, and courage in the forests than in our homes; they lose half of these advantages when they are Domesticated, and it would seem that all our care to treat and to feed these animals well only succeeds in bastardizing them. The same is true of man himself: As he becomes sociable and a Slave, he becomes weak,

timorous, groveling, and his soft and effeminate way of life completes the enervation of both his strength and his courage. Let us add that the difference between one man and another in the Savage and in the Domesticated condition must be even greater than that between one beast and another; for since animal and man were treated alike by Nature, all the conveniences which man gives himself above and beyond those he gives the animals he tames are so many particular causes that lead him to degenerate more appreciably.

[12] To go naked, to be without habitation, and to be deprived of all the useless things we believe so necessary is, then, not such a great misfortune for these first men nor, above all, is it such a great obstacle to their preservation. [*140*] While their skin is not very hairy, they do not need it to be in warm Countries, and in cold Countries they soon learn to appropriate the skins of the Beasts they have overcome; though they have only two feet for running, they have two arms to provide for their defense and for their needs; Their Children may walk late and with difficulty, but the Mothers carry them with ease: an advantage not enjoyed by the other species where the mother, when pursued, finds herself compelled to abandon her young or to adjust her pace to theirs.* Finally, unless one assumes the singular and fortuitous concatenations of circumstances, of which I shall speak in the sequel, and which could very well never have occurred, it is for all intents and purposes clear that he who first made himself clothes or a Dwelling thereby provided himself with things that are not very necessary, since he had done without them until then, and since it is not evident why he could not have tolerated as a grown man a mode of life he had tolerated from childhood.

[13] Alone, idle, and always near danger, Savage man must like to sleep and be a light sleeper like the animals which, since they think little, sleep, so to speak, all the time they do not think: Self-preservation being almost his only care, his most developed faculties

* There may be a few exceptions to this. For example that of the animal from the province of Nicaragua which resembles a Fox, has feet like a man's hands and, according to Corréal, has a pouch under its belly into which the mother puts her young when she has to flee. This is probably the same animal which in Mexico is called *Tlaquatzin*, and to the female of which Laët attributes a similar pouch serving the same purpose.

must be those that primarily serve in attack and defense, either in order to overcome his prey or to guard against becoming another animal's prey: By contrast, the organs that are perfected only by softness and sensuality must remain in a state of coarseness which precludes every kind of delicacy in him; and since his senses differ in this respect, his touch and taste will be extremely crude; his sight, hearing and smell most acute: Such is the animal state in general, and, according to Travelers' reports, it is also that of [*141*] most Savage Peoples. It is therefore not surprising that the Hottentots of the Cape of Good Hope can sight Ships with the naked eye as far out on the high seas as the Dutch can with Telescopes, nor that the Savages of America track the Spaniards by smell just as well as the best Dogs might have done, nor that all these Barbarous Nations tolerate their nakedness without discomfort, whet their taste with hot Peppers, and drink European Liquors like water.

[14] Until now I have considered only Physical Man; Let us now try to view him from the Metaphysical and Moral side.

[15] I see in any animal nothing but an ingenious machine to which nature has given senses in order to wind itself up and, to a point, protect itself against everything that tends to destroy or to disturb it. I perceive precisely the same thing in the human machine, with this difference that Nature alone does everything in the operations of the Beast, whereas man contributes to his operations in his capacity as a free agent. The one chooses or rejects by instinct, the other by an act of freedom; as a result the Beast cannot deviate from the Rule prescribed to it even when it would be to its advantage to do so, while man often deviates from it to his detriment. Thus a Pigeon would starve to death next to a Bowl filled with the choicest meats, and a Cat atop heaps of fruit or of grain, although each could very well have found nourishment in the food it disdains if it had occurred to it to try some; thus dissolute men abandon themselves to excesses which bring them fever and death; because the Mind depraves the senses; and the will continues to speak when Nature is silent.

[16] Every animal has ideas, since it has senses; up to a point it even combines its ideas, and in this respect man differs from the Beast only as more does from less: Some Philosophers have even suggested that there is a greater difference between one given man and another than there is between a given man and a given beast; It

is, then, not so much the understanding that constitutes the specific difference between man and the other animals, as it is his property of being a free agent. Nature commands every animal, and the Beast obeys. Man [*142*] experiences the same impression, but he recognizes himself free to acquiesce or to resist; and it is mainly in the consciousness of this freedom that the spirituality of his soul exhibits itself: for Physics in a way explains the mechanism of the senses and the formation of ideas; but in the power of willing, or rather of choosing, and in the sentiment of this power, are found purely spiritual acts about which nothing is explained by the Laws of Mechanics.

[17] But even if the difficulties surrounding all these questions left some room for disagreement about this difference between man and animal, there is another very specific property that distinguishes between them, and about which there can be no argument, namely the faculty of perfecting oneself; a faculty which, with the aid of circumstances, successively develops all the others, and resides in us, in the species as well as in the individual, whereas an animal is at the end of several months what it will be for the rest of its life, and its species is after a thousand years what it was in the first year of those thousand. Why is man alone liable to become imbecile? Is it not that he thus returns to his primitive state and that, whereas the Beast, which has acquired nothing and also has nothing to lose, always keeps its instinct, man again losing through old age or other accidents all that his *perfectibility* had made him acquire, thus relapses lower than the Beast itself? It would be sad for us to be forced to agree that this distinctive and almost unlimited faculty, is the source of all of man's miseries; that it is the faculty which, by dint of time, draws him out of that original condition in which he would spend tranquil and innocent days; that it is the faculty which, over the centuries, causing his enlightenment and his errors, his vices and his virtues to bloom, eventually makes him his own and Nature's tyrant (IX). It would be frightful to be obliged to praise as a beneficent being him who first suggested to the inhabitant of the Banks of the Orinoco the use of the Slats he ties to his Children's temples, and which insure at least a measure of their imbecility, and of their original happiness.

[18] Savage Man, left by Nature to bare instinct alone, or rather compensated for the instinct he perhaps lacks, by faculties capable

of initially making up for it, and [*143*] of afterwards raising him far above nature, will then begin with purely animal functions: (X) to perceive and to sense will be his first state, which he will have in common with all animals. To will and not to will, to desire and to fear, will be the first and almost the only operations of his soul until new circumstances cause new developments in it.

[19] Regardless of what the Moralists may say about it, the human understanding owes much to the Passions which, as is commonly admitted, also owe much to it: It is by their activity that our reason perfects itself; We seek to know only because we desire to enjoy, and it is not possible to conceive why someone who had neither desires nor fears would take the trouble to reason. The Passions, in turn, owe their origin to our needs, and their progress to our knowledge; for one can only desire or fear things in terms of the ideas one can have of them, or by the simple impulsion of Nature; and Savage man, deprived of every sort of enlightenment, experiences only the Passions of this latter kind; his Desires do not exceed his Physical needs (XI); The only goods he knows in the Universe are food, a female, and rest; the only evils he fears are pain, and hunger; I say pain, and not death; for an animal will never know what it is to die, and the knowledge of death, and of its terrors, is one of man's first acquisitions on moving away from the animal condition.

[20] If I had to do so, I could easily buttress this sentiment with facts, and show that in all Nations of the world, progress of the Mind proportioned itself exactly to the needs, which Peoples received from Nature, or to which circumstances subjected them, and consequently to the passions, which inclined them to satisfy these needs. I would show the arts being born in Egypt, and spreading with the floodings of the Nile; I would follow their progress among the Greeks, where they were seen to burgeon, grow, and rise to the Heavens amid the Sands and Rocks of Attica, without being able to take root on the fertile Banks of the Eurotas; I would point out that in general the Peoples of the North [*144*] are more industrious than those of the south because they can less afford not to be so, as if Nature wanted in this way to equalize things, by endowing Minds with the fertility it denies the Soil.

[21] But without resorting to the uncertain testimonies of History, who fails to see that everything seems to remove from Savage

man the temptation as well as the means to cease being savage? His imagination depicts nothing to him; his heart asks nothing of him. His modest needs are so ready to hand, and he is so far from the degree of knowledge necessary to desire to acquire greater knowledge, that he can have neither foresight nor curiosity. The spectacle of Nature becomes so familiar to him that he becomes indifferent to it. Forever the same order, forever the same revolutions; he lacks the wit to wonder at the greatest marvels; and it is not to him that one will turn for the Philosophy man needs in order to be able to observe once what he has seen every day. His soul, which nothing stirs, yields itself to the sole sentiment of its present existence, with no idea of the future, however near it may be, and his projects, as limited as his views, hardly extend to the close of day. Such is still nowadays the extent of the Carib's foresight: He sells his Cotton bed in the morning and comes weeping to buy it back in the evening, for not having foreseen that he would need it for the coming night.

[22] The more one meditates on this subject, the greater does the distance between pure sensations and the simplest knowledge grow in our eyes; and it is impossible to conceive how a man could, by his own strength alone, without the help of communication, and without the goad of necessity, have crossed so great a divide. How many centuries perhaps elapsed before men were in a position to see any other fire than that of Heaven? How many different chance occurrences must they have needed before they learned the most common uses of this element? How many times must they have let it go out before they mastered the art of reproducing it? And how many times did each one of these secrets perhaps die together with its discoverer? What shall we say about agriculture, an art requiring so much labor and foresight: dependent on other arts, which can quite obviously be pursued [*145*] only in a society that has at least begun, and which we use not so much to draw forth from the Earth foods it would readily yield without agriculture as to force it to [conform to] the predilections that are more to our taste? But let us suppose that men had multiplied so much that natural produce no longer sufficed to feed them; a supposition which, incidentally, would point to one great advantage for the human Species in this way of living; Let us suppose that without forges, and without Workshops, the tools for Farming had dropped from Heaven into the Savages' hands; that these men had overcome the mortal hatred

they all have of sustained work; that they had learned to foresee their needs sufficiently far ahead, that they had guessed how to cultivate the Earth, sow seed, and plant Trees; that they had found the art of grinding Wheat and of fermenting grapes; all of them things which the Gods had to be made to teach them, for want of conceiving how they could have learned them on their own; what man would, after all this, be so senseless as to torment himself with cultivating a Field that will be despoiled by the first passer-by, man or beast, fancying this harvest; and how will everyone resolve to spend his life doing hard work when the more he needs its rewards, the more certain he is not to reap them? In a word, how can this situation possibly dispose men to cultivate the Earth so long as it has not been divided among them, that is to say so long as the state of Nature is not abolished?

[23] Even if we should wish to suppose a Savage man as skillful in the art of thinking as our Philosophers make him out to be; even if, following their example, we should make of him a Philosopher as well, who discovers alone the most sublime truths, who by chains of extremely abstract reasoning establishes for himself maxims of justice and reason derived either from the love of order in general, or from the known will of his Creator; In a word, even if we should suppose him to have a mind as intelligent and as enlightened as it must be, and, indeed, is found to be, heavy and stupid, what use would the Species derive from all this Metaphysics, which could not be communicated and would perish with the individual who [*146*] had invented it? What progress could Mankind make, scattered in the Woods among the Animals? And how much could men perfect and enlighten one another who, having neither a fixed Dwelling nor any need of one another, might perhaps meet no more than twice in their life, without recognizing and speaking with one another?

[24] If one considers how many ideas we owe to the use of speech; How much Grammar exercises and facilitates the operations of the Mind; if one thinks about the inconceivable efforts and the infinite time the first invention of Languages must have cost; if one adds these reflections to those that preceded, then one can judge how many thousands of Centuries would have been required for the successive development in the human Mind of the Operations of which it was capable.

[25] Let me be allowed briefly to consider the perplexities regarding the origin of Languages. I could leave it at here quoting or restating the Abbé de Condillac's investigations of this matter, all of which fully confirm my sentiment, and which perhaps suggested its first idea to me. But since the manner in which this Philosopher resolves the difficulties he himself raises regarding the origin of instituted signs shows that he assumed what I question, namely some sort of society already established among the inventors of language, I believe that I ought to supplement the reference to his reflections with reflections of my own, in order to exhibit these same difficulties in the light best suited to my subject. The first difficulty that arises is to imagine how languages could have become necessary; for, Men having no relations with one another and no need of any, one cannot conceive the necessity or the possibility of this invention if it was not indispensable. I would be prepared to say, as many others do, that Languages arose in the domestic dealings between Fathers, Mothers and Children: but not only would this fail to meet the objections, it would be to commit the fallacy of those who, in reasoning about the state of Nature, carry over into it ideas taken from Society, and always see the family assembled in one and the same dwelling and its members maintaining among themselves as intimate and as permanent a union as they do among us, where so many common interests [*147*] unite them; whereas in this primitive state, without Houses or Huts or property of any kind, everyone bedded down at random and often for one night only; males and females united fortuitously, according to chance encounters, opportunity, and desire, without speech being an especially necessary interpreter of what they had to tell one another; they parted just as readily; (XII) The mother at first nursed her Children because of her own need; then, habit having made them dear to her, she went on to feed them because of theirs; as soon as they had the strength to forage on their own, they left even the Mother; And since almost the only way to find one another again was not to lose sight of one another in the first place, they soon were at the point of not even recognizing each other. Note, further, that since the Child has all of its needs to explain, and hence has more things to say to the Mother than the Mother has to the Child, it is the child that must contribute most to the invention, and that the language it uses must largely be of its own making; which

multiplies Languages by as many as there are individuals who speak them; their roving and vagabond life further contributes to this multiplication of languages, since it allows no idiom enough time to stabilize; for to say that the Mother dictates to the Child the words it will have to use in order to ask her for one thing or another shows how already formed Languages are taught, but it does not teach how they are formed.

[26] Let us suppose this first difficulty overcome: Let us for a moment cross the immense distance that must have separated the pure state of Nature from the need for Languages; and, by assuming them to be necessary (XIII), let us inquire how they might have begun to get established. New difficulty, even worse than the preceding one; for if Men needed speech in order to learn how to think, they needed even more to know how to think in order to find the art of speech; and even if it were understood how the sounds of the voice came to be taken for the conventional interpreters of our ideas, it would still leave open the question of what could have been the interpreters of that convention for ideas which, having no sensible object, could not be pointed to by gesture or by voice, so that it is scarcely possible to form [*148*] tenable conjectures about the origin of this Art of communicating one's thoughts, and of establishing exchanges between Minds: A sublime art which is already so far from its Origin but which the Philosopher sees as still so immensely far removed from perfection that no one is bold enough to assure that it will ever be reached, even if the revolutions which time necessarily brings about were suspended in its favor, even if Prejudices were to retire from Academies or fall silent before Them, and They could attend to this thorny topic for Centuries together without interruption.

[27] Man's first language, the most universal, the most energetic and the only language he needed before it was necessary to persuade assembled men, is the cry of Nature. Since this cry was wrested from him only by a sort of instinct on urgent occasions, to implore help in great dangers or relief in violent ills, it was not of much use in the ordinary course of life, where more moderate sentiments prevail. When men's ideas began to expand and to multiply, and closer communication was established among them, they sought more numerous signs and a more extensive language: They multiplied the inflections of the voice and added gestures which are by

their Nature more expressive, and less dependent for their meaning on prior agreement. Thus they expressed visible and moving objects by means of gestures, and objects that strike the ear by imitative sounds: but because gesture indicates almost only present or easily described objects and visible actions; because it is not universally serviceable since darkness or an interfering body render it useless, and because it requires attention rather than exciting it; it finally occurred to men to substitute for it the articulations of the voice which, although they do not stand in the same relation to some ideas, are better suited to represent them all, inasmuch as they are instituted signs; a substitution which can only have been made by common consent, which men whose crude vocal apparatus had as yet had no practice must have found rather difficult to implement, and which is even more difficult to conceive of in itself, since this unanimous agreement must have been motivated, and since speech [*149*] seems to have been very necessary in order to establish the use of speech.

[28] It would seem that the first words men used had in their Mind a much wider reference than do words used in already formed Languages, and that since they were ignorant of the Division of Discourse into its constituent parts, they at first assigned to each word the meaning of an entire proposition. When they began to distinguish between subject and predicate, and verb and noun, which was no mean feat of genius, substantives were at first just so many proper names, the present infinitive was the only tense of verbs, and as for adjectives, the very notion must have developed only with great difficulty, because every adjective is an abstract word, and abstractions are difficult and not particularly natural Operations.

[29] Each object was at first given a particular name without regard to kinds and Species, which these first Institutors were not in a position to distinguish; and all particulars presented themselves to their mind in isolation, just as they are in the picture of Nature. If one Oak was called A, another Oak was called B; for the first idea one derives from two objects is that they are not the same, and it often takes a good deal of time to notice what they have in common: so that the more limited knowledge was, the more extensive did the Dictionary grow. The clutter of all this Nomenclature was not easily cleared: for, in order to subsume the beings under

common and generic designations, their properties and differences had to be known; observations and definitions were needed, that is to say much more Natural History and Metaphysics than the men of that time could have had.

[30] Besides, general ideas can enter the Mind only with the help of words, and the understanding grasps them only by means of propositions. That is one of the reasons why animals could not form such ideas, nor ever acquire the perfectibility that depends on them. When a Monkey unhesitatingly goes from one nut to another, [*150*] are we to think that he has the general idea of this sort of fruit and compares its archetype with these two particulars? Surely not; but the sight of one of these nuts recalls to his memory the sensations he received from the other, and his eyes, modified in a certain way, announce to his taste how it is about to be modified. Every general idea is purely intellectual; if the imagination is at all involved, the idea immediately becomes particular. Try to outline the image of a tree in general to yourself, you will never succeed; in spite of yourself it will have to be seen as small or large, bare or leafy, light or dark, and if you could see in it only what there is in every tree, the image would no longer resemble a tree. Purely abstract beings are either seen in this same way, or conceived of only by means of discourse. Only the definition of a Triangle gives you the genuine idea of it: As soon as you figure one in your mind, it is a given Triangle and not another, and you cannot help making its lines perceptible or its surface colored. Hence one has to state propositions, hence one has to speak in order to have general ideas: for as soon as the imagination stops, the mind can proceed only by means of discourse. If, then, the first Inventors could give names only to the ideas they already had, it follows that the first substantives could never have been anything but proper names.

[31] But when, by means which I cannot conceive, our new Grammarians began to expand their ideas and to generalize their words, the Inventors' ignorance must have restricted this method to within very narrow bounds; and as they had at first gone too far in multiplying the names of particulars because they did not know kinds and species, they subsequently made too few species and kinds because they had not considered the Beings in all their differences. Extending the divisions far enough would have required more experience and enlightenment than they could have had, and

more research and work than they were willing to devote to it. If even nowadays new species are daily discovered which had so far escaped all our observations, think how many must have eluded men who judged things only by their first impression! As for primary Classes and the most [*151*] general notions, it would be superfluous to add that they, too, must have escaped them: How, for instance, would they have imagined or understood the words matter, mind, substance, mode, figure, motion, since our Philosophers, who have been using them for such a long time, have considerable difficulty understanding them themselves, and since, the ideas attached to these words being purely Metaphysical, they found no model of them in Nature?

[32] I pause after these first steps, and beg my Judges to suspend their Reading here, to consider, in the light of the invention of Physical nouns alone, that is to say in the light of the most easily found part of Language, how far it still has to go before it can express all of men's thoughts, assume a stable form, admit of being spoken in public, and have an influence on Society: I beg them to reflect on how much time and knowledge it took to find numbers (XIV), abstract words, Aorists, and all the tenses of Verbs, particles, Syntax, to connect Propositions, arguments, and to develop the entire Logic of Discourse. As for myself, frightened by the increasing difficulties, and convinced of the almost demonstrated impossibility that Languages could have arisen and been established by purely human means, I leave to anyone who wishes to undertake it the discussion of this difficult Problem: which is the more necessary, an already united Society for the institution of Languages, or already invented Languages for the establishment of Society?

[33] Whatever may be the case regarding these origins, it is at least clear, from how little care Nature has taken to bring Men together through mutual needs and to facilitate their use of speech, how little it prepared their Sociability, and how little of its own it has contributed to all that men have done to establish its bonds. Indeed, it is impossible to imagine why, in that primitive state, a man would need another man any more than a monkey or a Wolf would need his kind, or, assuming this need, to imagine what motives could induce the other to attend to it, or even, if he did, how they might agree on terms. I know that we are repeatedly told that nothing would have been as miserable as man in this state; and

if it is true, as I believe [*152*] I have proven, that he could have had the desire and the opportunity to leave it only after many Centuries, then this would be an Indictment of Nature, not of him whom nature had so constituted; but if I understand this term *miserable* correctly, it is a word either entirely devoid of sense, or which merely signifies a painful privation and suffering of Body or soul: Now, I should very much like to have it explained to me what kind of misery there can be for a free being, whose heart is at peace, and body in health. I ask, which of the two, Civil life or natural life, is more liable to become intolerable to those who enjoy it? Almost all the People we see around us complain of their existence, and some even deprive themselves of it as far as they are able, and the combination of divine and human Laws hardly suffices to stop this disorder: I ask whether anyone has ever heard tell that it so much as occurred to a Savage, who is free, to complain of life and to kill himself? One ought, then, to judge with less pride on which side genuine misery lies. Nothing, on the contrary, would have been as miserable as Savage man dazzled by enlightenment, tormented by Passions, and reasoning about a state different from his own. It was by a very wise Providence that the faculties he had in potentiality were to develop only with the opportunities to exercise them, so that they might not be superfluous and a burden to him before their time, nor belated and useless in time of need. In instinct alone he had all he needed to live in the state of Nature, in cultivated reason he has no more than what he needs to live in society.

[34] It would at first seem that men in that state having neither moral relations of any sort between them, nor known duties, could be neither good nor wicked, and had neither vices nor virtues, unless these words are taken in a physical sense and the qualities that can harm an individual's self-preservation are called vices, and those that can contribute to it, virtues; in which case he who least resists the simple impulsions of Nature would have to be called the most virtuous: But without straying from the ordinary sense, we should suspend the judgment we might pass on such a situation, and be wary of our Prejudices until it has been established, Scale in hand, whether there are more virtues than vices among [*153*] civilized men, or whether their virtues are more advantageous than their vices are detrimental, or whether the progress of their knowledge is sufficient compensation for the harms they do one another

in proportion as they learn of the good they should do, or whether their situation would not, on the whole, be happier if they had neither harm to fear nor good to hope for from anyone, than they are by having subjected themselves to universal dependence and obligated themselves to receive everything from those who do not obligate themselves to give them anything.

[35] Above all, let us not conclude with Hobbes that because he has no idea of goodness man is naturally wicked, that he is vicious because he does not know virtue, that he always refuses to those of his kind services which he does not believe he owes them, or that by virtue of the right which he reasonably claims to the things he needs, he insanely imagines himself to be the sole owner of the entire Universe. Hobbes very clearly saw the defect of all modern definitions of Natural right: but the conclusions he draws from his own definition show that he understands it in a sense that is no less false. By reasoning on the basis of the principles he establishes, this Author should have said that, since the state of Nature is the state in which the care for our own preservation is least prejudicial to the self-preservation of others, it follows that this state was the most conducive to Peace and the best suited to Mankind. He says precisely tbe contrary because he improperly included in Savage man's care for his preservation the need to satisfy a multitude of passions that are the product of Society and have made Laws necessary. A wicked man is, he says, a sturdy Child; it remains to be seen whether Savage Man is a sturdy Child; Even if it were granted him tbat he is, what would he conclude? That if this man, when sturdy, were as dependent on others as when he is weak, he would not stop at any kind of excess, that he would strike his Mother if she were slow to give him the breast, that he would strangle one of his young brothers if he discommoded him, that be would bite the other's leg if he hurt or bothered him; but being sturdy and being dependent are two contradictory assumptions in the state of Nature; Man is weak when he is dependent, and he is emancipated before he is sturdy. [*154*] Hobbes did not see that the same cause that keeps Savages from using their reason, as our Jurists claim they do, at the same time keeps them from abusing their faculties, as he himself claims they do; so that one might say that Savages are not wicked precisely because they do not know what it is to be good; for it is neither the growth of enlightenment nor the curb of the

Law, but the calm of the passions and the ignorance of vice that keep them from evil-doing; *so much more does the ignorance of vice profit these than the knowledge of virtue profits those*. There is, besides, another Principle which Hobbes did not notice and which, having been given to man in order under certain circumstances to soften the ferociousness of his amour propre or of the desire for self-preservation prior to the birth of amour propre, (xv) tempers his ardor for well-being with an innate repugnance to see his kind suffer. I do not believe I need fear any contradiction in granting to man the only Natural virtue which the most extreme Detractor of human virtues was forced to acknowledge. I speak of Pity, a disposition suited to beings as weak and as subject to so many ills as we are; a virtue all the more universal and useful to man as it precedes the exercise of all reflection in him, and so Natural that even the Beasts sometimes show evident signs of it. To say nothing of the tenderness Mothers feel for their young and of the dangers they brave in order to protect them, one daily sees the repugnance of Horses to trample a living Body underfoot; An animal never goes past a dead animal of his own Species without some restlessness: Some even give them a kind of burial; and the mournful lowing of Cattle entering a Slaughter-House conveys their impression of the horrible sight that strikes them. It is a pleasure to see the author of the *Fable of the Bees* forced to recognize man as a compassionate and sensitive Being, and abandon, in the example he gives of it, his cold and subtle style, to offer us the pathetic picture of a man locked up, who outside sees a ferocious Beast tearing a Child from his Mother's breast, breaking his weak limbs with its murderous fangs, and tearing the Child's throbbing entrails with its claws. What a dreadful [*155*] agitation must not this witness to an event in which he takes no personal interest whatsoever experience? What anguish must he not suffer at this sight, for not being able to give any help to the fainted Mother or the dying Child?

[36] Such is the pure movement of Nature prior to all reflection: such is the force of natural pity, which the most depraved morals still have difficulty destroying, since in our theaters one daily sees being moved and weeping at the miseries of some unfortunate person people who, if they were in the Tyrant's place, would only increase their enemy's torments; like bloodthirsty Sulla, so sensitive to ills which he had not caused, or that Alexander of Pherae who

dared not attend the performance of a single tragedy for fear that he might be seen to moan with Andromache and Priam, but who listened without emotion to the cries of so many citizens daily being murdered on his orders.

> *When nature gave man tears,*
> *She proclaimed that he was tender-hearted.*

[37] Mandeville clearly sensed that, for all their morality, men would never have been anything but monsters if Nature had not given them pity in support of reason: but he did not see that from this single attribute flow all the social virtues he wants to deny men. Indeed, what are generosity, Clemency, Humanity, if not Pity applied to the weak, the guilty, or the species in general? Even Benevolence and friendship, properly understood, are the products of a steady pity focused on a particular object; for what else is it to wish that someone not suffer, than to wish that he be happy? Even if it were true that commiseration is nothing but a sentiment that puts us in the place of him who suffers, a sentiment that is obscure and lively in Savage man, developed but weak in Civil man, what difference could this idea make to the truth of what I say, except to give it additional force? Indeed commiseration will be all the more energetic in proportion as the Onlooking animal identifies more intimately with the suffering animal: Now this identification must, clearly, have been infinitely closer in the state of Nature than in the state [*156*] of reasoning. It is reason that engenders amour propre, and reflection that reinforces it; reason that turns man back upon himself; reason that separates him from everything that troubles and afflicts him: It is Philosophy that isolates him; by means of Philosophy he secretly says, at the sight of a suffering man, perish if you wish, I am safe. Only dangers that threaten the entire society still disturb the Philosopher's tranquil slumber, and rouse him from his bed. One of his kind can with impunity be murdered beneath his window; he only has to put his hands over his ears and to argue with himself a little in order to prevent Nature, which rebels within him, from letting him identify with the man being assassinated. Savage man has not this admirable talent; and for want of wisdom and of reason he is always seen to yield impetuously to the first sentiment of Humanity. In Riots, in Street-brawls, the Populace gathers, the prudent man withdraws; it is the rabble,

it is the Marketwomen who separate the combatants, and keeps honest folk from murdering one another.

[38] It is therefore quite certain that pity is a natural sentiment which, by moderating in every individual the activity of self-love, contributes to the mutual preservation of the entire species. It is pity that carries us without reflection to the assistance of those we see suffer; pity that, in the state of Nature, takes the place of Laws, morals, and virtue, with the advantage that no one is tempted to disobey its gentle voice; pity that will keep any sturdy Savage from robbing a weak child or an infirm old man of his hard-won subsistence if he can hope to find his own elsewhere: pity that, in place of that sublime maxim of reasoned justice *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*, inspires in all Men this other maxim of natural goodness, much less perfect but perhaps more useful than the first: *Do your good with the least possible harm to others*. It is, in a word, in this Natural sentiment rather than in subtle arguments that one has to seek the cause of the repugnance to evil-doing which every human being would feel even independently of the maxims of education. While Socrates and minds of his stamp may be able to acquire virtue through reason, mankind would long ago [*157*] have ceased to be if its preservation had depended solely on the reasonings of those who make it up.

[39] With such sluggish passions and such a salutary curb, fierce rather than wicked, and more intent on protecting themselves from the harm they might suffer than tempted to do any to others, men were not prone to very dangerous quarrels: since they had no dealings of any kind with one another; since they therefore knew neither vanity, nor consideration, nor esteem, nor contempt; since they had not the slightest notion of thine and mine, or any genuine idea of justice; since they looked on any violence they might suffer as an easily repaired harm rather than as a punishable injury, and since they did not even dream of vengeance except perhaps mechanically and on the spot like the dog that bites the stone thrown at him; their disputes would seldom have led to bloodshed if they had had no more urgent object than Food: but I see one that is more dangerous, which it remains for me to discuss.

[40] Among the passions that stir man's heart, there is one that is ardent, impetuous, and makes one sex necessary to the other, a

terrible passion that braves all dangers, overcomes all obstacles, and in its frenzy seems liable to destroy Mankind which it is destined to preserve. What must become of men possessed by this unbridled and brutal rage, lacking modesty, lacking restraint, and daily feuding over their loves at the cost of their blood?

[41] It has to be granted from the first that the more violent the passions, the more necessary are Laws to contain them: but quite aside from the fact that the disorders and the crimes they daily cause among us sufficiently prove the inadequacy of the Laws in this respect, it would still be worth inquiring whether these disorders did not arise together with the Laws themselves; for then, even if they could repress them, it is surely the very least to expect of them that they put a stop to an evil that would not exist without them.

[42] Let us begin by distinguishing the moral from the Physical in the sentiment of love. The Physical is this general desire that moves one sex to unite with the other; the moral is what gives this desire its distinctive character and focuses it exclusively on a single object, [*158*] or at least gives it a greater measure of energy for this preferred object. Now it is easy to see that the moral aspect of love is a factitious sentiment; born of social practice, and extolled with much skill and care by women in order to establish their rule and to make dominant the sex that should obey. This sentiment, since it is based on certain notions of merit or of beauty which a Savage is not in a position to possess, and on comparisons he is not in a position to make, must be almost nonexistent for him: For as his mind could not form abstract ideas of regularity and of proportion, so his heart cannot feel the sentiments of admiration and of love that arise, without our even noticing it, from applying these ideas; he heeds only the temperament he received from Nature, and not a taste which he could not bave acquired, and any woman suits him.

[43] Limited to the Physical aspect of love alone, and fortunate enough not to know preferences that exacerbate its sentiment and increase its difficulties, men must feel the ardors of temperament less frequently and less vividly, and hence have fewer and less cruel quarrels among themselves. Tbe imagination, which wreaks such havoc among us, does not speak to Savage hearts; everyone

peacefully awaits the impulsion of Nature, yields to it without choice with more pleasure than frenzy, and, the need once satisfied, all desire is extinguished.

[44] It is therefore indisputable that love itself, like all the other passions, acquired only in society the impetuous ardor that so often causes it to be fatal among men, and it is all the more ridiculous to portray Savages as constantly murdering one another in order to satisfy their brutality, as this opinion goes directly counter to experience, and as the Caribs, which of all existing Peoples has so far deviated least from the state of Nature, are in fact also the most peaceful in their loves and the least given to jealousy, even though they live in a scorching Climate which always seems to rouse these passions to greater activity. [*159*]

[45] Regarding the inferences that might be drawn in a number of animal species from the fights between the Males that bloody our poultry yards at all seasons or make our forests resound in Springtime with their cries as they feud over a female, we must begin by excluding from consideration all species where Nature has clearly established in the relative power of the Sexes different relations than among us: Thus Cock-fights do not provide a basis for inferences about the human species. In species where the Proportion is more even, such fights can only be caused by the scarcity of females in relation to the number of Males, or by the periods of exclusion during which the female consistently spurns the male's advances, which amounts to the first cause; for if each female tolerates the male only two months out of the year, it is in this respect tantamount to having the number of females reduced by five-sixths: Now, neither of these alternatives applies to the human species, where the number of females generally exceeds that of males, and where, even among Savages, females have never been known to have periods of heat and of rejection, as do those of other species. Moreover, among several of these animals, where the entire species ruts at the same time, there comes one terrible moment of common ardor, tumult, disorder, and fighting: a moment which does not occur in the human species, where love is never cyclical. One can therefore not conclude from the fights of some animals for the possession of females that the same thing would happen to man in the state of Nature; and even if one could draw this conclusion, since such dissensions do not destroy the other species, it seems at least

reasonable that they would not be any more fatal to ours, and it is quite evident that they would still wreak less havoc in the state of nature than they do in Society, especially in Countries where Morals still count for something and the jealousy of Lovers and the vengeance of Husbands daily cause Duels, Murders, and worse; where the duty of eternal fidelity only makes for adulteries, and where even the Laws of continence and of honor inevitably increase debauchery, and multiply abortions.

[46] Let us conclude that, wandering in the forests without industry, [*160*] without speech, without settled abode, without war, and without tie, without any need of others of his kind and without any desire to harm them, perhaps even without ever recognizing any one of them individually, subject to few passions and self-sufficient, Savage man had only the sentiments and the enlightenment suited to this state, that he sensed only his true needs, looked only at what he believed it to be in his interest to see, and that his intelligence made no more progress than his vanity. If by chance he made some discovery, he was all the less in a position to communicate it as he did not recognize even his Children. The art perished with the inventor; there was neither education nor progress, generations multiplied uselessly; and as each one of them always started at the same point, Centuries went by in all the crudeness of the first ages, the species had already grown old, and man remained ever a child.

[47] If I have dwelt at such length on the assumption of this primitive condition, it is because, having ancient errors and inveterate prejudices to destroy, I believed I had to dig to the root, and to show in the depiction of the genuine state of Nature how far inequality, even natural inequality, is from having as much reality and influence in that state as our Writers claim.

[48] Indeed it is easy to see that, among the differences that distinguish men, several are taken to be natural although they are exclusively the result of habit and of the different kinds of life men adopt in Society. Thus a sturdy or a delicate temperament, together with the strength or the weakness that derive from it, are often due more to a tough or an effeminate upbringing than to the bodies' primitive constitution. The same is true of strengths of Mind, and education not only introduces differences between Minds that are cultivated and those that are not, but it also increases the differences that obtain between cultivated Minds in proportion to their culture;

for when a Giant and a Dwarf travel the same road, every step they take will give the Giant an added advantage. Now if one compares the prodigious variety of educations and ways of life that prevails in the different orders of the civil state with the simplicity and the uniformity of animal and savage life, where all eat the same foods, live in the same [*161*] fashion, and do exactly the same things, it will be evident how much smaller the difference between man and man must be in the state of Nature than in the state of society, and how much natural inequality in the human species must increase as a result of instituted inequality.

[49] But even if Nature displayed as much partiality in the distribution of its gifts as is claimed, what advantage would the more favored enjoy at the expense of the others in a state of things that allowed for almost no relations of any sort between them? Where there is no love, of what use is beauty? Of what use is wit to people who do not speak, and cunning to those who have no dealings with one another? I constantly hear it repeated that the stronger will oppress the weak; but explain to me what the word oppression here means? Some will dominate by violence, the others will groan, subject to all their whims! this is precisely what I see among us, but I do not see how the same could be said about Savage men, whom it would even be rather difficult to get to understand what subjection and domination are. A man might seize the fruits another has picked, the game he killed, the lair he used for shelter; but how will he ever succeed in getting himself obeyed by him, and what would be the chains of dependence among men who possess nothing? If I am tormented in one place, who will keep me from going somewhere else? Is there a man so superior to me in strength, and who, in addition, is so depraved, so lazy, and so ferocious as to force me to provide for his subsistence while he remains idle? He will have to make up his mind not to let me out of his sight for a single moment and to keep me very carefully tied up while he sleeps, for fear that I might escape or kill him: that is to say that he is obliged to incur willingly a great deal more trouble than he seeks to avoid and than he causes me. After all this, what if his vigilance relaxes for a moment? What if an unexpected noise make him turn his head? I take twenty steps into the forest, my chains are broken, and he never sees me again in his life.

[50] Without needlessly drawing out these details, everyone must [*162*] see that since ties of servitude are formed solely by men's mutual dependence and the reciprocal needs that unite them, it is impossible to subjugate a man without first having placed him in the position of being unable to do without another; a situation which, since it does not obtain in the state of Nature, leaves everyone in it free of the yoke, and renders vain the Law of the stronger.

[51] Having proved that Inequality is scarcely perceptible in the state of Nature and that its influence there is almost nil, it remains for me to show its origin and its progress through the successive developments of the human Mind. Having shown that *perfectibility*, the social virtues and the other faculties which natural man had received in potentiality could never develop by themselves, that in order to do so, they needed the fortuitous concatenation of several foreign causes which might never have arisen and without which he would eternally have remained in his primitive condition; it remains for me to consider and bring together the various contingencies that can have perfected human reason while deteriorating the species, made a being wicked by making it sociable, and from so remote a beginning finally bring man and the world to the point where we now find them.

[52] I admit that since the events I have to describe could have occurred in several ways, I can choose between them only on the basis of conjectures; but not only do such conjectures become reasons when they are the most probable that can be derived from the nature of things and the only means available to discover the truth, it also does not follow that the consequences I want to deduce from mine will therefore be conjectural since, on the principles I have just established, no other system could be formed that would not give me the same results and from which I could not draw the same conclusions.

[53] This will exempt me from expanding my reflections about how the lapse of time makes up for the slight likelihood of events; about the astonishing power of very slight causes when they act without cease; about the impossibility, on the one hand, of rejecting certain hypotheses without, on the other hand, being in a position to attach to them the certainty of facts; about how, when two facts given as real are to be connected by a sequence of intermediate facts

that are unknown or believed [*163*] to be so, it is up to history, if available, to provide the facts that connect them; about how, in the absence of history, it is up to Philosophy to ascertain similar facts that might connect them; finally about this, that with respect to outcomes, similarity reduces facts to a much smaller number of different classes than people imagine. It is enough for me to submit these issues for consideration to my Judges: it is enough for me to have seen to it that vulgar Readers need not consider them.

PART II

[1] The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, to whom it occurred to say *this is mine*, and found people sufficiently simple to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders, how many miseries and horrors Mankind would have been spared by him who, pulling up the stakes or filling in the ditch, had cried out to his kind: Beware of listening to this impostor; You are lost if you forget that the fruits are everyone's and the Earth no one's: But in all likelihood things had by then reached a point where they could not continue as they were; for this idea of property, depending as it does on many prior ideas which could only arise successively, did not take shape all at once in man's mind: Much progress had to have been made, industry and enlightenment acquired, transmitted, and increased from one age to the next, before this last stage of the state of Nature was reached. Let us therefore take up the thread earlier, and try to fit this slow succession of events and of knowledge together from a single point of view, and in their most natural order.

[2] Man's first sentiment was that of his existence, his first care that for his preservation. The Earth's products provided him with all necessary support, instinct moved him to use them. Hunger, other appetites causing him by turns to experience different ways of existing, there was one that prompted him to perpetuate his species; and this blind inclination, devoid of any sentiment of the heart, produced only a purely animal act. The need satisfied, the two sexes no longer recognized one another, and even the child no longer meant anything to the Mother as soon as it could do without her.

[3] Such was the condition of nascent man; such was the life of an animal at first restricted to pure sensations, [*165*] and scarcely profiting from the gifts Nature offered him, let alone dreaming of wresting anything from it; but difficulties soon presented themselves; it became necessary to learn to overcome them: the height of Trees which prevented him from reaching their fruits, competition from the animals trying to eat these fruits, the ferociousness of the animals that threatened his very life, everything obliged him to attend to bodily exercise; he had to become agile, run fast, fight vigorously. The natural weapons, branches and stones, were soon

at hand. He learned to overcome the obstacles of Nature, fight other animals when necessary, contend even with men for his subsistence, or make up for what had to be yielded to the stronger.

[4] In proportion as Mankind spread, difficulties multiplied together with men. Differences of terrain, Climate, seasons, could have forced them to introduce differences into their ways of living. Barren years, long and harsh winters, scorching all-consuming Summers, required renewed industry on their part. On seashores and Riverbanks they invented line and hook; and became fishermen and Fish-eaters. In forests they made bows and arrows, and became Hunters and Warriors; In cold Countries they covered themselves with the skins of the beasts they had killed; Lightning, a Volcano, or some happy accident acquainted them with fire, a new resource against the rigors of winter: They learned to conserve this element, then to reproduce it, and finally to prepare the meats they had previously devoured raw.

[5] This repeated interaction of the various beings with himself as well as with one another must naturally have engendered in man's mind perceptions of certain relations. The relations which we express by the words great, small, strong, weak, fast, slow, fearful, bold, and other such ideas, compared as need required and almost without thinking about it, finally produced in him some sort of reflection, or rather a mechanical prudence that suggested to him the precautions most necessary for his safety.

[6] The new enlightenment that resulted from this development increased his superiority over the other animals by acquainting him with it. He practiced setting [*166*] traps for them, he tricked them in a thousand ways, and although a number of them might surpass him in strength at fighting, or in speed at running; in time he became the master of those that could be useful, and the scourge of those that could be harmful to him. This is how his first look at himself aroused the first movement of pride in him; this is how, while as yet scarcely able to discriminate ranks, and considering himself in the first rank as a species, he was from afar preparing to claim first rank as an individual.

[7] Although others of his kind were not for him what they are for us, and he had scarcely more dealings with them than with the other animals, they were not neglected in his observations. The conformities which time may have led him to perceive between

them, his female, and himself, led him to judge regarding those he did not perceive, and seeing that they all behaved as he would have done in similar circumstances, he concluded that their way of thinking and of feeling fully corresponded to his own, and this important truth, once it was firmly settled in his mind, made him follow, by a premonition as sure as Dialectics and more rapid, the best rules of conduct to observe with them for his advantage and safety.

[8] Taught by experience that love of well-being is the sole spring of human actions, he was in a position to distinguish between the rare occasions when common interest should make him count on the help of his kind, and the even rarer occasions when competition should make him suspicious of them. In the first case he united with them in a herd, or at most in some kind of free association that obligated no one and lasted only as long as the transient need that had formed it. In the second case everyone sought to seize his own advantage, either by open force if he believed that he could do so; or by skill and cunning, if he felt he was the weaker.

[9] This is how men might imperceptibly have acquired some crude idea of mutual engagements and of the advantage of fulfilling them, but only as far as present and perceptible interest could require; for foresight was nothing to them and, far from being concerned with a distant future, they did not even give thought to the next day. If a Deer was to be caught, everyone [*167*] clearly sensed that this required him faithfully to keep his post; but if a hare happened to pass within reach of one of them, he will, without a doubt, have chased after it without a scruple and, after catching his prey, have cared very little about having caused his Companions to miss theirs.

[10] It is easy to understand that such dealings did not require a language much more refined than that of Crows or of Monkeys, which troop together in approximately the same way. Some inarticulate cries, many gestures, and a few imitative noises must, for a long time, have made up the universal Language, [and] the addition to it, in every Region, of a few articulated and conventional sounds – the institution of which is, as I have already said, none too easy to explain – made for particular languages, crude, imperfect and more or less such as various Savage Nations have now. I cover multitudes of Centuries in a flash, forced by time running out, the abundance of things I have to say, and the almost imperceptible

progress of the beginnings; for the more slowly events succeeded one another, the more quickly can they be described.

[11] This initial progress finally enabled man to make more rapid progress. The more the mind became enlightened, the more industry was perfected. Soon ceasing to fall asleep underneath the first tree or to withdraw into Caves, they found they could use hard, sharp stones as hatchets to cut wood, dig in the ground, and make huts of branches which it later occurred to them to daub with clay and mud. This was the period of a first revolution which brought about the establishment and the differentiation of families, and introduced a sort of property; from which there perhaps already arose a good many quarrels and Fights. However, since the stronger were probably the first to make themselves dwellings they felt they could defend, it seems plausible that the weak found it simpler and safer to imitate them than to try to dislodge them: and as for those who already had Huts, a man must rarely have tried to appropriate his neighbor's, not so much because it did not belong to him as because it was of no use to him, and he could not get hold of it without risking a very lively fight with the family that occupied it. [*168*]

[12] The first developments of the heart were the effect of a new situation that brought husbands and Wives, Fathers and Children together in a common dwelling; the habit of living together gave rise to the sweetest sentiments known to man, conjugal love, and Paternal love. Each family became a small Society, all the better united as mutual attachment and freedom were its only bonds; and this is when the first difference was established in the ways of living of the two Sexes, which until then had had but one. Women became more sedentary and grew accustomed to looking after the Hut and Children, while the man went in quest of the common subsistence. As a result of their slightly softer life, both Sexes also began to lose something of their ferociousness and vigor: but while each separately grew less fit to fight wild beasts, in exchange it became easier to assemble in order to resist them together.

[13] In this new state, with a simple and solitary life, very limited needs, and the implements they had invented to provide for them, men enjoyed a great deal of leisure which they used to acquire several sorts of conveniences unknown to their Fathers; and this was the first yoke which, without thinking of it, they imposed on themselves, and the first source of evils they prepared for their

Descendants; for not only did they, in this way, continue to weaken body and mind, but since these conveniences, by becoming habitual, had almost entirely ceased to be enjoyable, and at the same time had degenerated into true needs, it became much more cruel to be deprived of them than to possess them was sweet, and men were unhappy to lose them without being happy to possess them.

[14] Here one gets a somewhat better view of how the use of speech is imperceptibly established or perfected in the bosom of each family, and one can further conjecture how various particular causes could enlarge language, and accelerate its progress by making it more necessary. Great floods or earthquakes surrounded inhabited Areas with waters or precipices; Revolutions of the Globe broke off portions of the Continent and carved them into Islands. It seems likely that a common Idiom was formed earlier among men brought into closer proximity with one another in this fashion, and forced [*169*] to live together, than among those who roamed freely through the forests of the Mainland. Thus it is very possible that Islanders, after their first attempts at Navigation, introduced the use of speech among us; and it is at least very likely that Society and languages arose in Islands and were perfected there before they were known on the Continent.

[15] Everything begins to change in appearance. Men, who until now had roamed in the Woods, having become more settled, gradually come together, unite in various troops, and finally in every region form a particular Nation united in morals and character, not by Rules or Laws, but by the same kind of life and of foods, and the influence of a shared Climate. Permanent proximity cannot fail in the end to give rise to some bond between different families. Young people of the opposite sex live in adjoining Huts, the transient dealings demanded by Nature soon lead to others, no less sweet and more permanent as a result of mutual visits. They grow accustomed to attend to different objects and to make comparisons; imperceptibly they acquire ideas of merit and of beauty which produce sentiments of preference. The more they see one another, the less they can do without seeing one another more. A tender and sweet sentiment steals into the soul, and at the least obstacle becomes an impetuous frenzy; jealousy awakens together with love; Discord triumphs, and the gentlest of all passions receives sacrifices of human blood.

[16] As ideas and sentiments succeed one another, as the mind and the heart grow active, Mankind continues to grow tame, contacts expand and bonds tighten. It became customary to gather in front of the Huts or around a large Tree: song and dance, true children of love and leisure, became the amusement or rather the occupation of idle men and women gathered together. Everyone began to look at everyone else and to wish to be looked at himself, and public esteem acquired a price. The one who sang or danced best; the handsomest, the strongest, the most skillful, or the most eloquent came to be the most highly regarded, and this was the first step at once toward inequality and vice: [*170*] from these first preferences arose vanity and contempt on the one hand, shame and envy on the other; and the fermentation caused by these new leavens eventually produced compounds fatal to happiness and innocence.

[17] As soon as men had begun to appreciate one another and the idea of consideration had taken shape in their mind, everyone claimed a right to it, and one could no longer deprive anyone of it with impunity. From here arose the first duties of civility even among Savages, and from it any intentional wrong became an affront because, together with the harm resulting from the injury, the offended party saw in it contempt for his person, often more unbearable than the harm itself. Thus everyone punishing the contempt shown him in a manner proportionate to the stock he set by himself, vengeances became terrible, and men bloodthirsty and cruel. This is precisely the stage reached by most of the Savage Peoples known to us; and it is for want of drawing adequate distinctions between ideas, and noticing how far these Peoples already were from the first state of Nature, that many hastened to conclude that man is naturally cruel and that he needs political order in order to be made gentle, whereas nothing is as gentle as he in his primitive state when, placed by Nature at equal distance from the stupidity of the brutes and the fatal enlightenment of civil man, and restricted by instinct and by reason alike to protecting himself against the harm that threatens him, he is restrained by Natural pity from doing anyone harm, without being moved to it by anything, even after it has been done to him. For, according to the axiom of the wise Locke, "*Where there is no property, there can be no injury.*"

[18] But it should be noted that beginning Society and the already established relations among men required in them qualities different

from those they derived from their primitive constitution; that, since morality was beginning to enter into human Actions and since, before there were Laws, everyone was sole judge and avenger of the offenses he had received, the goodness suited to the pure state of Nature was no longer the goodness suited to nascent Society; that punishments had to become more severe in proportion as the opportunities to offend became more frequent, and that the terror of vengeance had [*171*] to take the place of the Laws' restraint. Thus, although men now had less endurance, and natural pity had already undergone some attenuation, this period in the development of human faculties, occupying a just mean between the indolence of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our amour propre, must have been the happiest and the most lasting epoch. The more one reflects on it, the more one finds that this state was the least subject to revolutions, the best for man (XVI), and that he must have left it only by some fatal accident which, for the sake of the common utility, should never have occurred. The example of the Savages, almost all of whom have been found at this point, seems to confirm that Mankind was made always to remain in it, that this state is the genuine youth of the World, and that all subsequent progress has been so many steps in appearance toward the perfection of the individual, and in effect toward the decrepitude of the species.

[19] So long as men were content with their rustic huts, so long as they confined themselves to sewing their clothes of skins with thorns or fish bones, to adorning themselves with feathers and shells, to painting their bodies different colors, to perfecting or embellishing their bows and arrows, to carving a few fishing Canoes or a few crude Musical instruments with sharp stones; In a word, so long as they applied themselves only to tasks a single individual could perform, and to arts that did not require the collaboration of several hands, they lived free, healthy, good, and happy as far as they could by their Nature be, and continued to enjoy the gentleness of independent dealings with one another; but the moment one man needed the help of another; as soon as it was found to be useful for one to have provisions for two, equality disappeared, property appeared, work became necessary, and the vast forests changed into smiling Fields that had to be watered with the sweat of men, and where slavery and misery were soon seen to sprout and grow together with the harvests.

[20] Metallurgy and agriculture were the two arts the invention of which brought about this great revolution. For the Poet it is gold and silver; but for the Philosopher it is iron and wheat that civilized men, and ruined Mankind. Indeed, both were [*172*] unknown to the Savages of America who have therefore always remained such; even other Peoples seem to have remained Barbarians as long as they engaged in one of these Arts without the other; and perhaps one of the best reasons why Europe had political order, if not earlier then at least more continuously and better than the other parts of the world, is that it is both the most abundant in iron and the most fertile in wheat.

[21] It is very difficult to conjecture how men came to know and to use iron: for it is not plausible that they imagined on their own extracting ore from the mine and doing what is required to prepare it for smelting, before they knew what the outcome would be. On the other hand, it is even less plausible to attribute this discovery to some accidental fire, as mines are formed only in arid places bare of trees and plants, so that it might seem that Nature had taken precautions to withhold this fatal secret from us. The only remaining alternative, then, is that some extraordinary event, such as a Volcano throwing up molten metal, will have given its Witnesses the idea of imitating this operation of Nature; even then, they must also be assumed to have had a good deal of courage and foresight to undertake such strenuous labor and to anticipate so far in advance the advantages they might derive from it; which really only accords with minds already more skilled than these must have been.

[22] As for agriculture, its principle was known long before its practice was established, and it is scarcely possible that men constantly engaged in drawing their subsistence from trees and plants would not fairly soon have the idea of how Nature proceeds in the generation of Plants; but their industry probably turned in that direction only rather late, either because trees which, together with hunting and fishing, provided their food, did not require their care, or for want of knowing the use of wheat, or for want of implements to cultivate it, or for want of anticipating future need, or, finally, for want of means to prevent others from appropriating the fruit of their labor. Once they had become more industrious, they probably began by cultivating a few vegetables or roots with sharp stones or pointed sticks [*173*] around their Huts, long before they knew

how to thresh and grind wheat, and had the implements necessary for large-scale cultivation, to say nothing of the fact that, in order to devote oneself to this occupation and sow fields, one has to decide to take an initial loss for the sake of great future gain; a foresight that is very alien to the turn of mind of Savage man who, as I have said, has trouble giving thought in the morning to his needs in the evening.

[23] The Invention of the other arts was therefore necessary to force Mankind to attend to the art of agriculture. As soon as men were needed to melt and forge iron, others were needed to feed them. The more the number of workers increased, the fewer hands were engaged in providing for the common subsistence, without there being any fewer mouths to consume it; and as some had to have foods in exchange for their iron, the others finally discovered the secret of using iron to increase foods. Thus arose on the one hand Plowing and agriculture, and on the other the art of working metals and multiplying their uses.

[24] From the cultivation of land, its division necessarily followed; and from property, once recognized, the first rules of justice necessarily followed: for in order to render to each his own, each must be able to have something; moreover, as men began to extend their views to the future and all saw that they had some goods to lose, there was no one who did not have to fear reprisals against himself for the wrongs he might do to another. This origin is all the more natural as it is impossible to conceive the idea of nascent property in any other way than in terms of manual labor: for it is not clear what, more than his labor, man can put into things he has not made, in order to appropriate them. Since labor alone gives the Cultivator the right to the produce of the land he has tilled, it consequently also gives him a right to the land, at least until the harvest, and thus from one year to the next, which, as it makes for continuous possession, is easily transformed into property. When the Ancients, says Grotius, gave Ceres the title legislatrix and a festival celebrated in her honor the name Thesmophoria, they thereby indicated that the division [*174*] of land produced a new kind of right. Namely the right of property different from that which follows from natural Law.

[25] Things in this state could have remained equal if talents had been equal and if, for example, the use of iron and the consumption

of foods had always been exactly balanced; but this proportion, which nothing maintained, was soon upset; the stronger did more work; the more skillful used his work to better advantage; the more ingenious found ways to reduce his labor; the Plowman had greater need of iron, or the smith greater need of wheat, and by working equally, the one earned much while the other had trouble staying alive. This is how natural inequality imperceptibly unfolds together with unequal associations, and the differences between men, developed by their different circumstances, become more perceptible, more permanent in their effects, and begin to exercise a corresponding influence on the fate of individuals.

[26] Things having reached this point, it is easy to imagine the rest. I shall not pause to describe the successive invention of the other arts, the progress of languages, the testing and exercise of talents, the inequalities of fortune, the use or abuse of Wealth, nor all the details that attend them and which everyone can easily add. I shall limit myself to a brief glance at Mankind placed in this new order of things.

[27] Here, then, are all our faculties developed, memory and imagination brought into play, amour propre interested, reason become active, and the mind almost at the limit of the perfection of which it is capable. Here are all natural qualities set in action, every man's rank and fate set, not only as to the amount of their goods and the power to help or to hurt, but also as to mind, beauty, strength or skill, as to merit or talents, and, since these are the only qualities that could attract consideration, one soon had to have or to affect them; for one's own advantage one had to seem other than one in fact was. To be and to appear became two entirely different things, and from this distinction arose ostentatious display, deceitful cunning, and all the vices that follow in their wake. Looked at in another way, man, who had previously been free and independent, is now so to speak subjugated by a [*175*] multitude of new needs to the whole of Nature, and especially to those of his kind, whose slave he in a sense becomes even by becoming their master; rich, he needs their services; poor, he needs their help, and moderate means do not enable him to do without them. He must therefore constantly try to interest them in his fate and to make them really or apparently find their own profit in working for his: which makes him knavish and artful with some, imperious and harsh with the

rest, and places him under the necessity of deceiving all those he needs if he cannot get them to fear him and does not find it in his interest to make himself useful to them. Finally, consuming ambition, the ardent desire to raise one's relative fortune less out of genuine need than in order to place oneself above others, instills in all men a black inclination to harm one another, a secret jealousy that is all the more dangerous as it often assumes the mask of benevolence in order to strike its blow in greater safety: in a word, competition and rivalry on the one hand, conflict of interests on the other, and always the hidden desire to profit at another's expense; all these evils are the first effect of property, and the inseparable train of nascent inequality.

[28] Before its representative signs were invented, wealth could scarcely consist in anything but land and livestock, the only real goods that men can possess. Now, once inheritances had increased in number and size to the point where they covered all the land and all adjoined one another, men could no longer aggrandize themselves except at one another's expense, and the supernumeraries whom weakness or indolence had kept from acquiring an inheritance of their own, grown poor without having lost anything because they alone had not changed while everything was changing around them, were obliged to receive or to seize their subsistence from the hands of the rich; and from this began to arise, according to the different characters of the poor and the rich, domination and servitude, or violence and plunder. The rich, for their part, had scarcely become acquainted with the pleasure of dominating than they disdained all other pleasures, and using their old Slaves to subject new ones, they thought only of subjugating and enslaving their neighbors; like those ravenous wolves which once they have tasted human flesh [*176*] scorn all other food, and from then on want to devour only men.

[29] Thus, as the most powerful or the most miserable claimed, on the basis of their strength or of their needs, a kind of right to another person's goods, equivalent, according to them, to the right of property, the breakdown of equality was followed by the most frightful disorder: thus the usurpations of the rich, the Banditry of the Poor, the unbridled passions of all, stifling natural pity and the still weak voice of justice, made men greedy, ambitious, and wicked. A perpetual conflict arose between the right of the stronger and the

right of the first occupant, which only led to fights and murders (XVII). Nascent Society gave way to the most horrible state of war: Humankind, debased and devastated, no longer able to turn back or to renounce its wretched acquisitions, and working only to its shame by the abuse of the faculties that do it honor, brought itself to the brink of ruin.

Shocked by the novelty of the evil,
at once rich and miserable,
He seeks to escape his wealth,
and hates what he had just prayed for.

[30] It is not possible that men should not at last have reflected on such a miserable situation, and on the calamities besetting them. The rich, above all, must soon have sensed how disadvantageous to them was a perpetual war of which they alone bore the full cost, and in which everyone risked his life while only some also risked goods. Besides, regardless of how they painted their usurpations, they realized well enough that they were only based on a precarious and abusive right, and that since they had been acquired solely by force, force could deprive them of them without their having any reason for complaint. Even those whom industriousness alone had enriched could scarcely base their property on better titles. No matter if they said: It is I who built this wall; I earned this plot by my labor. Who set its boundaries for you, they could be answered; and by virtue of what do you lay claim to being paid at our expense for labor we did not impose on you? Do you not know that a great many of your brothers perish or suffer from need of what you have in excess, and that you required the express and unanimous [*177*] consent of Humankind to appropriate for yourself anything from the common subsistence above and beyond your own? Lacking valid reasons to justify and sufficient strength to defend himself; easily crushing an individual, but himself crushed by troops of bandits; alone against all, and unable, because of their mutual jealousies, to unite with his equals against enemies united by the common hope of plunder, the rich, under the pressure of necessity, at last conceived the most well-considered project ever to enter the human mind; to use even his attackers' forces in his favor, to make his adversaries his defenders, to instill in them other maxims and to

give them different institutions, as favorable to himself as natural Right was contrary to him.

[31] To this end, after exhibiting to his neighbors the horror of a situation that armed all of them against one another, that made their possessions as burdensome to them as their needs, and in which no one found safety in either poverty or wealth, he easily invented specious reasons to bring them around to his goal: "Let us unite," he told them, "to protect the weak from oppression, restrain the ambitious, and secure for everyone the possession of what belongs to him: Let us institute rules of Justice and peace to which all are obliged to conform, which favor no one, and which in a way make up for the vagaries of fortune by subjecting the powerful and the weak alike to mutual duties. In a word, instead of turning our forces against one another, let us gather them into a supreme power that might govern us according to wise Laws, protect and defend all the members of the association, repulse common enemies, and preserve us in everlasting concord."

[32] Much less than the equivalent of this Discourse was needed to sway crude, easily seduced men who, in any event, had too much business to sort out among themselves to be able to do without arbiters, and too much greed and ambition to be able to do for long without Masters. All ran toward their chains in the belief that they were securing their freedom; for while they had enough reason to sense the advantages of a political establishment, [*178*] they had not enough experience to foresee its dangers; those most capable of anticipating the abuses were precisely those who counted on profiting from them, and even the wise saw that they had to make up their mind to sacrifice one part of their freedom to preserve the other, as a wounded man has his arm cut off to save the rest of his Body.

[33] Such was, or must have been, the origin of Society and of Laws, which gave the weak new fetters and the rich new forces (XVIII), irreversibly destroyed natural freedom, forever fixed the Law of property and inequality, transformed a skillful usurpation into an irrevocable right, and for the profit of a few ambitious men henceforth subjugated the whole of Mankind to labor, servitude and misery. It is easy to see how the establishment of a single Society made the establishment of all the others indispensable, and how, in

order to stand up to united forces, it became necessary to unite in turn. Societies, multiplying and expanding rapidly, soon covered the entire face of the earth, and it was no longer possible to find a single corner anywhere in the universe where one might cast off the yoke and withdraw one's head out of the way of the often ill-guided sword everyone perpetually saw suspended over it. Civil right having thus become the common rule of the Citizens, the Law of Nature no longer obtained except between different Societies where, under the name of Right of nations, it was tempered by a few tacit conventions in order to make commerce possible and to replace natural commiseration which, losing in the relations between one Society and another almost all the force it had in the relations between one man and another, lives on only in a few great Cosmopolitan Souls who cross the imaginary boundaries that separate Peoples and, following the example of the sovereign being that created them, embrace the whole of Mankind in their benevolence.

[34] The Bodies Politic thus remaining in the state of Nature among themselves soon experienced the inconveniences that had forced individuals to leave it, and this state became even more fatal among these great Bodies than it had previously been among the individuals who made them up. From it arose the National Wars, Battles, murders, reprisals that [*179*] make Nature tremble and that shock reason, and all those horrible prejudices that rank among the virtues the honor of spilling human blood. The most honest men learned to count it as one of their duties to slay their kind; in time men were seen to massacre one another by the thousands without knowing why; and more murders were committed in a single day's fighting, and more horrors at the capture of a single town, than had been committed in the state of Nature for centuries together over the entire face of the earth. Such are the first discernible effects of the division of Mankind into different Societies. Let us return to their institution.

[35] I know that some have attributed other origins to Political Societies, such as conquest by the more powerful, or the union of the weak; and the choice between these causes does not make a difference to what I want to establish: however, the cause of their origin which I have just given seems to me the most natural for the following reasons: 1. That, in the first case, the Right of conquest, since it is not a Right, could not have served as the foun-

dation for any other Right, for the Conqueror and the conquered Peoples always remain in a state of War with one another unless the Nation, restored to full freedom, voluntarily chooses its Victor as its Chief. Until that time, regardless of what may have been the terms of capitulation, as they were based on nothing but violence and are consequently null by this very fact, there can, on this hypothesis, be neither genuine Society, nor Body Politic, nor any Law other than that of the stronger. 2. That, in the second case, the words *strong* and *weak* are equivocal; that during the interval that separates the establishment of the Right of property or of the first occupant and the establishment of political Governments, the meaning of these terms is better conveyed by the terms *poor* and *rich*, because in fact, prior to the Laws, a man had no other means of subjugating his equals than by attacking their goods or making some of his own over to them. 3. That the Poor having nothing to lose but their freedom, it would have been a great folly for them to deprive themselves voluntarily of the only good they had left without gaining anything in exchange; that the rich, on the contrary, being so to speak sensitive in every part of their Goods, it was much easier to hurt them, and that they consequently [*180*] had to take more precautions to protect themselves against getting hurt; and that, finally, it is reasonable to believe that a thing was invented by those to whom it is useful rather than by those whom it harms.

[36] Nascent Government had no constant and regular form. For want of Philosophy and of experience, only present inconveniences were noticed, and men gave thought to remedying the others only as they became manifest. Despite all the labors of the wisest Lawgivers, the Political state always remained imperfect because it was almost a product of chance and because, having begun badly, time revealed its flaws and suggested remedies but could never repair the vices of the Constitution; it was constantly being patched; whereas the thing to do would have been to begin by purging the threshing floor and setting aside all the old materials, as Lycurgus did in Sparta, in order afterwards to erect a good Building. Initially Society consisted of but a few general conventions which all individuals pledged to observe, and of which the Community made itself tha guarantor toward each one of them. Experience had to show how weak such a constitution was, and how easily offenders could escape conviction or punishment for wrongs of which the Public

alone was to be both witness and judge; the Law had to be eluded in a thousand ways, inconveniences and disorders had to keep multiplying, before it finally occurred to them to entrust the dangerous custody of the public authority to private individuals, and to commit to Magistrates the task of getting the People's deliberations heeded: for to say that the Chiefs were chosen before the confederation was established, and that the Ministers of the Laws existed before the Laws themselves, is an assumption not worthy of serious refutation.

[37] It would be no more reasonable to believe that Peoples initially threw themselves unconditionally and irrevocably into the arms of an absolute Master, and that the first means of providing for the common safety that proud and untamed men imagined was to rush headlong into slavery. Indeed, why did they give themselves superiors if not to defend them against oppression, and to protect their goods, their freedoms and their lives, which are, so to speak, the constitutive [*181*] elements of their being? Now since in the relations between man and man the worst that can happen to one is to find himself at the other's discretion, would it not have been against good sense to begin by surrendering into the hands of a Chief the only things they needed his help to preserve? What equivalent could he have offered them for the concession of so fine a Right; and if he had dared to exact it on the pretext of defending them, would he not straightway have received the answer of the Fable: What more will the enemy do to us? It is therefore incontrovertible, and it is the fundamental maxim of all Political Right, that Peoples gave themselves Chiefs to defend their freedom, and not to enslave them. *If he have a Prince*, said Pliny to Trajan, *it is so that he may preserve us from having a Master.*

[38] Politicians propound the same sophisms about the love of freedom that Philosophers propounded about the state of Nature; on the basis of the things they see, they judge of very different things which they have not seen, and they attribute to men a natural inclination to servitude because of the patience with which the men they have before their eyes bear theirs, not realizing that it is as true of freedom as it is of innocence and virtue that one appreciates their worth only as long as one enjoys them oneself, and loses the taste for them as soon as they are lost. I know the delights of your Country, said Brasidas to a Satrap who was comparing the life of

Sparta with that of Persepolis, but you cannot know the pleasures of mine.

[39] As an untamed Steed bristles its mane, stamps the ground with its hoof, and struggles impetuously at the very sight of the bit, while a trained horse patiently suffers whip and spur, so barbarous man will not bend his head to the yoke which civilized man bears without a murmur, and he prefers the most tempestuous freedom to a tranquil subjection. Man's natural dispositions for or against servitude therefore have to be judged not by the degradation of enslaved Peoples but by the prodigious feats of all free Peoples to guard against oppression. I know that the former do nothing but incessantly boast of the peace and quiet they enjoy in their chains, and that *they call the most miserable servitude peace*: but when I see the others sacrifice pleasures, rest, wealth, [*182*] power, and life itself for the sake of preserving this one good which those who have lost it hold in such contempt; when I see Animals born free and abhorring captivity smash their heads against the bars of their prison; when I see multitudes of completely naked Savages scorn European voluptuousness and brave hunger, fire, the sword, and death in order to preserve nothing but their independence, I feel that it is not for Slaves to reason about freedom.

[40] As for Paternal authority, from which some have derived absolute Government and the whole of Society, without invoking Locke's or Sidney's proofs to the contrary, it suffices to note that nothing in the world is farther from the ferocious spirit of Despotism than the gentleness of this authority which looks more to the advantage of the one who obeys than to the utility of the one who commands; that by the Law of Nature the Father is the Child's master only as long as it needs his assistance, that beyond that point they become equal, and that then the son, perfectly independent of the Father, owes him only respect and not obedience; for gratitude is indeed a duty that ought to be performed, but it is not a right that can be exacted. Instead of saying that civil Society is derived from Paternal power, it should, on the contrary, be said that this power derives its principal force from civil Society: an individual was recognized as the Father of many only once they remained assembled around him; the Father's goods, of which he is genuinely the Master, are the bonds that keep his children dependent on him, and he may [choose to] give them no more of a share of his estate

than is proportional to how well they have deserved of him by constant deference to his wishes. Now subjects, far from being in a position to expect a similar favor from their Despot – since they belong to him as his own, they and everything they possess, or at least since that is what he claims – are reduced to receiving as a favor whatever portion of their goods he leaves them; he dispenses justice when he despoils them; he dispenses grace when he lets them live.

[41] If one continued thus to examine the facts in terms of Right, the voluntary establishment of Tyranny would prove to be no more substantial than it is true, and it would be difficult to show the validity of a contract which obligated [*183*] only one of the parties, in which one side granted everything and the other nothing, and which could only prove prejudicial to the one who commits himself. This odious System is very far from being even today that of Wise and good Monarchs, and especially of the Kings of France, as may be seen in various places in their Edicts, and in particular in the following passage of a famous Text published in 1667 in the name and by the orders of Louis XIV. *Let it therefore not be said that the Sovereign is not subject to the Laws of his State, since the contrary proposition is a truth of the Right of Nations, which flattery has sometimes challenged, but which good Princes have always defended as a tutelary divinity of their States. How much more legitimate it is to say with the Wise Plato that the perfect felicity of a Kingdom is that a Prince be obeyed by his Subjects, that the Prince obey the Law, and that the Law be right and always directed to the public good.* I shall not pause to inquire whether, since freedom is man's noblest faculty, it is not to debase one's Nature, to place oneself at the level of Beasts that are the slaves of instinct, even to offend the Author of one's being, if one unconditionally renounces the most precious of all his gifts, if one submits to committing all the crimes he forbids us, in order to comply with a ferocious and insane Master, nor whether this sublime workman ought to be more irritated at seeing his finest work destroyed than at seeing it dishonored. I shall ignore, if one wishes, the authority of Barbeyrac who, following Locke, explicitly declares that no one may sell his freedom to the point of submitting to an arbitrary power that treats him according to its fancy: *For*, he adds, *that would be to sell one's very life, of which one is not master.* I shall only ask by what Right those who were not afraid to debase themselves to this point could subject their posterity to the same

ignominy, and on its behalf renounce goods which it does not owe to their liberality and without which life itself is a burden to all who are worthy of it?

[42] Pufendorf says that just as one transfers one's goods to another by conventions and Contracts, so too can one divest oneself of one's freedom in favor of someone else. This seems to me to be a very bad argument; for, first of all, the goods I alienate become something altogether foreign to me, and their abuse is a matter of indifference [*184*] to me; but it is important to me that my freedom not be abused, and I cannot risk becoming the instrument of a crime without incurring the guilt of the evil I shall be forced to commit: Moreover, since the Right of property is only by convention and human institution, every man can dispose of what he possesses as he pleases: but the same does not hold for the essential Gifts of Nature, such as life and freedom, which everyone is permitted to enjoy and of which it is at least doubtful that one has the Right to divest oneself; in depriving oneself of the one, one debases one's being; In depriving oneself of the other one annihilates it as much as in one lies; and as no temporal good can compensate for life or freedom, it would be an offense against both Nature and reason to renounce them at any price whatsoever. But even if one could alienate one's freedom as one can one's goods, the difference would be very great for Children who enjoy the Father's goods only by the transfer of his right, whereas freedom, since it is a gift they have from Nature in their capacity as human beings, their Parents had no Right to divest them of it; so that just as violence had to be done to Nature in order to establish Slavery, Nature had to be altered in order to perpetuate this Right; And the Jurists who have gravely pronounced that the child of a Slave would be born a Slave have in other words decided that a man would not be born a man.

[43] It therefore seems to me certain not only that Governments did not begin with Arbitrary Power, which is but their corruption, their ultimate stage, and which at last returns them to the sole Law of the stronger for which they initially were the remedy, but also that even if this is how they did begin, Arbitrary Power, being by its Nature illegitimate, cannot have served as the foundation for the Rights of Society nor, consequently, for instituted inequality.

[44] Without at present entering into the inquiries that still remain to be pursued about the Nature of the fundamental Pact of all Government, I restrict myself in accordance with the common

opinion to consider here the establishment of the Body Politic as a true Contract between the People and the Chiefs it chooses for itself; a Contract by which both Parties obligate themselves to observe the Laws stipulated in it and which form the bonds of their union. The People having, in regard to Social relations, united all their [*185*] wills into a single one, all the articles about which this will pronounces become so many fundamental Laws that obligate all the members of the State without exception, and one of which regulates the selection and the power of the Magistrates charged with attending to the execution of the other Laws. This power extends to everything that can preserve the Constitution, without going so far as to change it. To it are joined honors that render the Laws and their Ministers respectable and, for the Ministers personally, prerogatives compensating them for the strenuous labors which good administration requires. The Magistrate, for his part, obligates himself to use the power entrusted to him only in conformity with the intention of the Constituents, to maintain everyone in the peaceful enjoyment of what belongs to him, and on all occasions to prefer the public utility to his self-interest.

[45] Before experience had shown or knowledge of the human heart had led [men] to anticipate the inevitable abuses of such a constitution, it must have appeared all the better, as those assigned to see to its preservation themselves had the greatest interest in its being preserved; for since the Magistracy and its Rights were established only by the fundamental Laws, as soon as these are destroyed, the Magistrates would cease to be legitimate, the People would no longer be bound to obey them, and since it would have been the Law and not the Magistrate that constituted the essence of the State, everyone would by Right revert to his Natural freedom.

[46] If one but paused to reflect about it attentively, this would be confirmed by new reasons, and it would be evident from the Nature of the Contract that it could not be irrevocable: for if there were no superior power capable of guaranteeing the Contracting parties' fidelity or of forcing them to fulfill their reciprocal engagements, the Parties would remain sole judges in their own case, and each would always have the Right to renounce the Contract whenever it found that the other had violated its terms, or that these terms ceased to suit it. This is the principle on which the Right to abdicate could, it would seem, be founded. Now, considering, as

we are doing, only human institution, if the Magistrate, who has all the power in hand, and appropriates to himself all the advantages of the Contract, nevertheless had the right to renounce his autho[*186*]rity; then there is all the more reason that the People, who pay for all of the Chiefs' failings, should have the Right to renounce Dependence. But the frightful dissensions, the infinite disorders which this dangerous power would necessarily entail, show more than anything else does how much human Governments needed a more solid base than reason alone, and how necessary it was for the public repose that the divine will intervene to endow the Sovereign authority with a sacred and inviolable character that might deprive subjects of the fatal Right to dispose of it. If Religion had performed only this good for men, it would be enough for them all to have to cherish and adopt it, even with its abuses, since it still spares more blood than fanaticism causes to flow: but let us follow the thread of our hypothesis.

[47] The different forms of Governments owe their origin to the greater or lesser differences between individuals at the time of Institution. Was one man preeminent in power, wealth, or prestige? he alone was elected Magistrate, and the State became Monarchic; if several, nearly equal among themselves, surpassed all the others, they were elected together, and there was an Aristocracy; those whose fortunes or talents were less disparate, and who had moved least far from the state of Nature, retained the supreme Administration in common, and formed a Democracy. Time confirmed which one of these forms was the most advantageous to men. Some remained exclusively subject to Laws, the others were soon obeying Masters. Citizens wanted only to keep their freedom, subjects thought only of depriving their neighbors of theirs, because they found it insufferable that others enjoy a good which they themselves no longer enjoyed. In a word, on one side were wealth and Conquests, and on the other happiness and virtue.

[48] In these various Governments all Magistracies were at first Elective; and when Wealth did not prevail, preference was accorded to merit, which confers a Natural Ascendancy, and to age, which confers experience in business and equanimity in deliberations. The Hebrews' elders, Sparta's Gerontes, Rome's Senate, and the very Etymology of our word *Seigneur*, show how [*187*] respected Old Age formerly was. The more Elections settled on men of advanced

age, the more frequent they became, and the more their cumbersomeness made itself felt; intrigues arose, factions formed, the parties grew embittered, civil Wars flared up, at last the blood of Citizens was sacrificed to the supposed happiness of the State, and men were on the verge of relapsing into the Anarchy of former times. The ambition of the most Preeminent men took advantage of these circumstances to perpetuate their offices within their families: The People, already accustomed to dependence, repose, and the comforts of life, and already past the state where they could break their chains, consented to let their servitude increase in order to consolidate their tranquility, and that is how Chiefs, having become hereditary, grew accustomed to regard their Magistracy as a family possession, to regard themselves the owners of the State of which they at first were only the Officers, to calling their Fellow-Citizens their Slaves, to counting them like Cattle among the things that belonged to them, and to calling themselves equals to the Gods and Kings of Kings.

[49] If we follow the progress of inequality through these different revolutions, we will find that the establishment of the Law and Right of property was its first term; the institution of Magistracy, the second; the conversion of legitimate into arbitrary power the third and last; so that the state of rich and poor was authorized by the first Epoch, that of powerful and weak by the second, and by the third that of Master and Slave, which is the last degree of inequality, and the state to which all the others finally lead, until new revolutions either dissolve the Government entirely, or bring it closer to legitimate institution.

[50] To understand the necessity of this progress one has to consider not so much the motives for the establishment of the Body Politic, as the form it assumes in its implementation, and the inconveniences it entails: for the same vices that make social institutions necessary make their abuse inevitable; and since, with the sole exception of Sparta where the Law primarily attended to the Children's education, and where Lycurgus established morals that almost made the addition of [*188*] Laws unnecessary, Laws, in general less strong than the passions, contain men without changing them; it would be easy to prove that any Government that invariably worked exactly in accordance with the end for which it had been instituted, without disintegrating or deteriorating, would

have been instituted unnecessarily, and a Country where no one eluded the Laws and abused the Magistracy would need neither Magistrates nor Laws.

[51] Political distinctions necessarily bring about civil distinctions. Growing inequality between the People and its Chiefs soon manifests itself among private individuals, where it undergoes a thousand modifications according to passions, talents, and circumstances. The Magistrate could not usurp illegitimate power without creating clients to whom he is forced to yield some share of it. Besides, Citizens let themselves be oppressed only so far as they are swept up by blind ambition and, looking below more than above themselves, come to hold Domination dearer than independence, and consent to bear chains so that they might impose chains [on others] in turn. It is very difficult to reduce to obedience someone who does not seek to command, and the cleverest Politician would never succeed in subjugating men whose only wish was to be Free; but inequality readily spreads among ambitious and pusillanimous souls, ever ready to take their chance on fortune, and almost equally prepared to rule or to serve depending on whether it favors or foils them. Thus a time must have come when the eyes of the People were so dazzled that their leaders only had to say to the least of men, be Great, you and your entire race, and at once he appeared great in everyone else's eyes as well as in his own, and his Descendants were exalted still further in proportion to their distance from him; the more remote and uncertain the cause, the greater the effect; the more idlers could be counted in a family, the more illustrious it became.

[52] If this were the place to go into details, I could easily show how, even without the Government's intervention, inequality of prestige and authority becomes inevitable among Private Individuals (XIX) as soon as, united in one Society, they are forced to [*189*] compare themselves one with the other and, in the continual use they have to make of one another, to take account of the differences they find. These differences are of several kinds; but since wealth, nobility or rank, Power and personal merit are generally the principal distinctions by which one is measured in Society, I would prove that the concord or conflict between these various forces is the surest indication of a well or a badly constituted State: I would show that of these four sorts of inequality, as personal qualities are

the origin of all the others, riches is the last to which they are finally reduced, because, being the most immediately useful to well-being and the easiest to transmit, it can readily be used to buy all the rest. This observation makes it possible to tell rather accurately the extent to which each People has moved from its original institution, and how far it has gone toward the ultimate stage of corruption. I would show how much this universal desire for reputation, honors, and preferment which consumes us all exercises and compares talents and strengths, how much it excites and multiplies the passions and, in making all men competitors, rivals, or rather enemies, how many reverses, how many successes, how many catastrophes of every kind it daily causes by leading so many Contenders to enter the same lists: I would show that it is to this ardor to be talked about, to this frenzy to achieve distinction which almost always keeps us outside ourselves, that we owe what is best and what is worst among men, our virtues and our vices, our Sciences and our errors, our Conquerors and our Philosophers, that is to say a multitude of bad things for a small number of good things. Finally, I would prove that if one sees a handful of powerful and rich men at the pinnacle of greatness and fortune while the masses grovel in obscurity and misery, it is because the former value the things they enjoy only to the extent that the others are deprived of them, and they would cease to be happy if, without any change in their own state, the People ceased to be miserable.

[53] But these details alone would provide material for a substantial work that weighed the advantages and inconveniences of all Government relative to the Rights of the state of Nature, and laid bare all [*190*] the different guises inequality has assumed to this day and may in future Centuries assume according to the Nature of these Governments and to the revolutions time will necessarily bring about in them. One would see the multitude oppressed from within as a consequence of the very precautions it had taken against threats from without; One would see oppression constantly grow without the oppressed ever being able to know where it might end, or what legitimate means they have left to halt it. One would see the Rights of Citizens and National freedoms die out little by little, and the protests of the weak treated as seditious grumblings. One would see politics restrict the honor of defending the common cause to a mercenary portion of the People: One would see as a result

taxes become necessary, the discouraged Cultivator leave his field even in Peacetime, and abandon his plow to gird on the sword. One would see arise the fatal and bizarre rules regarding the point of honor: One would see the defenders of the Fatherland sooner or later become its Enemies, forever holding the dagger raised over their fellow-citizens, and a time would come when they would be heard to say to their Country's oppressor

If you order me to plunge the sword into my brother's breast,
Or my father's throat, or even my pregnant wife's womb,
I shall do so, though my right arm be unwilling.

[54] From the extreme inequality of Conditions and fortunes, from the diversity of passions and talents, from the useless arts, the pernicious arts, the frivolous Sciences, would arise masses of prejudices equally contrary to reason, happiness and virtue; one would see Chiefs foment everything that can weaken assembled men by disuniting them; everything that can give Society an air of apparent concord while sowing seeds of real division; everything that can inspire mistrust and mutual hatred in the different estates by setting their Rights and interests at odds, and so strengthen the Power that contains them all.

[55] From amidst this disorder and these revolutions Despotism, gradually rearing its hideous head [*191*] and devouring everything good and wholesome it may have seen anywhere in the State, would finally succeed in trampling Laws and People underfoot, and in establishing itself on the ruins of the Republic. The times preceding this last change would be times of troubles and calamities; but in the end everything would be swallowed up by the Monster; and Peoples would no longer have Chiefs or Laws, but only Tyrants. From that moment on there would also no longer be any question of morals and virtue; for wherever Despotism rules, *where honesty offers no hope*, it suffers no other master; as soon as it speaks, there is no consulting probity or duty, and the blindest obedience is the only virtue left to Slaves.

[56] Here is the last stage of inequality, and the ultimate point that closes the Circle and meets the point from which we set out: Here all private individuals again become equal because they are nothing and, since the Subjects have no other Law left than the will of the Master, and the Master no other rule than his passions,

the notions of the good and the principles of justice again vanish. Here everything reverts to the sole Law of the stronger and consequently to a new State of Nature, different from that with which we began in that the first was the state of Nature in its purity, whereas this last is the fruit of an excess of corruption. There is, in any event, so little difference between the two states, and the Contract of Government is so utterly dissolved by Despotism, that the Despot is Master only so long as he is the stronger, and that as soon as he can be expelled he cannot object to violence. The uprising that finally strangles or dethrones a Sultan is as lawful an action as those by which, the day before, he disposed of his Subjects' lives and goods. Force alone maintains him, force alone overthrows him; things thus proceed according to the Natural order; and whatever may be the outcome of these brief and frequent revolutions, no one can complain of another's injustice, but only of his own imprudence or misfortune.

[57] In thus discovering and retracing the forgotten and lost paths that must have led man from the Natural state to the Civil state; in restoring, in addition to the intermediary [*192*] stages I have just indicated, those which the pressure of time made me omit or the imagination failed to suggest to me; any attentive Reader cannot but be struck by the immense distance that separates these two states. It is in this slow succession of things that he will find the solution to an infinite number of problems of ethics and of Politics which Philosophers are unable to solve. He will sense that, since the Mankind of one age is not the Mankind of another age, the reason why Diogenes did not find a man is that he was looking among his contemporaries for the man of a time that was no more: Cato, he will say, perished with Rome and freedom, because he was out of place in his century, and the greatest of men only amazed the world he would have governed five hundred years earlier. In a word, he will explain how the human soul and passions, by imperceptible adulterations, so to speak change in Nature; why in the long run the objects of our needs and of our pleasures change; why, as original man gradually vanishes, Society no longer offers to the eyes of the wise man anything but an assemblage of artificial men and factitious passions which are the product of all these new relationships, and have no true foundation in Nature. Observation fully confirms what reflection teaches us on this subject: Savage

man and civilized man differ so much in their inmost heart and inclinations that what constitutes the supreme happiness of the one would reduce the other to despair. The first breathes nothing but repose and freedom, he wants only to live and to remain idle, and even the Stoic's ataraxia does not approximate his profound indifference to everything else. By contrast, the Citizen, forever active, sweats, scurries, constantly agonizes in search of ever more strenuous occupations: he works to the death, even rushes toward it in order to be in a position to live, or renounces life in order to acquire immortality. He courts the great whom he hates, and the rich whom he despises; he spares nothing to attain the honor of serving them; he vaingloriously boasts of his baseness and of their protection and, proud of his slavery, he speaks contemptuously of those who have not the honor of sharing it. What a Sight the difficult and envied labors of a European Statesman must be for a Carib! How many cruel deaths would not [*193*] this indolent Savage prefer to the horror of such a life, which is often not even sweetened by the pleasure of doing well? But in order to see the purpose of so many cares, these words, *power* and *reputation*, would have to have some meaning in his mind; he would have to learn that there is a sort of men who count how they are looked upon by the rest of the universe for something, who can be happy and satisfied with themselves on the testimony of others rather than on their own. This, indeed, is the genuine cause of all these differences: the Savage lives within himself; sociable man, always outside himself, is capable of living only in the opinion of others and, so to speak, derives the sentiment of his own existence solely from their judgment. It is not part of my subject to show how such a disposition engenders so much indifference to good and evil together with such fine discourses on morality; how everything being reduced to appearances, everything becomes factitious and play-acting: honor, friendship, virtue, and often even vices in which one at length discovers the secret of glorying; how, in a word, forever asking of others what we are, without ever daring to ask it of ourselves, in the midst of so much Philosophy, humanity, politeness, and Sublime maxims, we have nothing more than a deceiving and frivolous exterior, honor without virtue, reason without wisdom, and pleasure without happiness. It is enough for me to have proved that this is not man's original state, and that it is only the spirit of Society, together with the inequality

society engenders, that changes and corrupts all our natural inclinations this way.

[58] I have tried to give an account of the origin and the progress of inequality, the establishment and the abuse of political Societies, in so far as these things can be deduced from the Nature of man by the light of reason alone, and independently of the sacred Dogmas that endow Sovereign authority with the Sanction of Divine Right. It follows from this account that inequality, being almost nonexistent in the state of Nature, owes its force and growth to the development of our faculties and the progress of the human Mind, and finally becomes stable and legitimate by the establishment of property and Laws. It follows, further, that moral inequality, authorized by positive right alone, is contrary to Natural Right whenever it is not [*194*] directly proportional to Physical inequality; a distinction which sufficiently determines what one ought to think in this respect of the sort of inequality that prevails among all civilized Peoples; since it is manifestly against the Law of Nature, however defined, that a child command an old man, an imbecile lead a wise man, and a handful of people abound in superfluities while the starving multitude lacks in necessities.

Rousseau's Notes

Epistle Dedicatory (page 115)

Note I Herodotus relates that after the murder of the false Smerdis, when the seven liberators of Persia gathered to deliberate about the form of Government they would give the State, Otanes strongly favored a republic; an opinion all the more extraordinary in the mouth of a Satrap as, in addition to any claim he might have had to the Empire, the great fear more than death any sort of Government that forces them to respect men. Otanes, as might be expected, was not heeded, and seeing that they were going to proceed to the election of a Monarch he, who wanted neither to obey nor to command, freely yielded to the other Contenders his right to the crown, asking in return only that he himself and his posterity be free and independent; which was granted him. Even if Herodotus did not tell us the restriction placed on this Privilege, it would necessarily have to be assumed; otherwise Otanes, not recognizing any sort of Law and not having to account to anyone, would have been all-powerful in the State, and more powerful than the King himself. But it was scarcely likely that a man capable in a case like this of being satisfied with such a prerogative was capable of abusing it. Indeed, there is no evidence that this right ever caused the least trouble in the Kingdom, due either to the wise Otanes, or to any one of his descendants.

Preface (page 124)

Note II [1] With the very first step I take, I confidently rely on one of those authorities that are respectable to Philosophers because they come from a solid and sublime reason which they alone are capable of discovering and appreciating.

[2] "However great may be our interest in knowing ourselves, I wonder whether we do not know better everything that is not ourselves. Provided by Nature with organs destined exclusively for our preservation, we use them only to receive foreign impressions, we seek only to spread outward, and to exist outside ourselves; too busy [*196*] multiplying the functions of our senses and extending the external scope of our being, we rarely use that internal sense

which reduces us to our true dimensions, and separates from us everything that does not belong to it. Yet this is the sense we must use if we wish to know ourselves; it is the only one by which we can judge ourselves; but how is this sense to be made active and given its full scope? How is our Soul, within which it resides, to be freed of all of our Mind's illusions? We have lost the habit of using it, it has remained without exercise amidst the riot of our bodily sensations, it has been dried up in the fire of our passions; the heart, the Mind, the senses, everything has worked against it." *Hist[oire] Nat[urelle]* vol. IV, p. 151, *de la Nat[ure] de l'homme.*

Discourse (page 134)

Note III [1] The changes that a long practice of walking on two feet may have produced in man's structure, the similarities that can still be observed between his arms and the Forelegs of Quadrupeds, and the inference drawn from the way they walk, may have given rise to some doubts about which way of walking must have been most natural to us. All children begin by walking on all fours and need our example and lessons to learn to stand upright. There are even Savage Nations, such as the Hottentots, which greatly neglect their Children and let them walk on their hands for so long that later they have a good deal of trouble getting them to straighten up; the children of the Caribs of the Antilles do the same. There are various instances of Quadruped men, and I could cite among others that of the Child found in 1344 near Hesse where he had been raised by Wolves, and who subsequently said at the Court of Prince Henry that if it had been up to himself alone, he would have preferred to return among them rather than to live among men. He had become so accustomed to walking like those animals, that wood Splints had to be tied on him which forced him to hold himself upright and keep his balance on two feet. The same was true of the Child found in 1694 in the forests of Lithuania, and who lived among Bears. He gave, says M. de Condillac, no sign of reason, walked on his hands and feet, had no language, and made sounds which in no way resembled those of a human being. The little Savage of Hanover who several years ago was brought to the Court of England had all the trouble in the world getting adjusted to walking on two feet, and in 1719 two more Savages were found in

the Pyrenees, who roamed the mountains in the manner of quadrupeds. As for the possible objection that this means that we deprive ourselves of the use of the hands, to which we owe so many advantages, quite aside from the fact that [*197*] the example of the monkeys shows that the hand can very well be used in both ways, it would only prove that man can assign to his limbs a more convenient destination than Nature's, and not that Nature destined man to walk otherwise than it teaches him to do.

[2] But there are, it seems to me, much better reasons for holding that man is a biped. First of all, even if it were shown that he could originally have been structured differently than he visibly is, and nevertheless eventually become what he is, this would not be reason enough to conclude that that is how it did happen: For before these changes are accepted, it would have to be shown not only that they are possible, but also that they are at least likely. Moreover, while it does seem that man's arms could have served him for Legs in case of need, this is the only observation that lends this system support, as against a great many others that are contrary to it. The principal ones are: that if man had walked on all fours, then the manner in which his head is attached to his body, instead of directing his gaze horizontally, as is that of all other animals, and as is his own when he walks upright, would have kept him, when he walks on all fours, with his eyes fixed directly at the ground, a position scarcely favorable to the preservation of the individual; that the tail he lacks, and for which he has no use in walking on two feet, is useful to quadrupeds, and that none of them is without it; that the woman's breast, very well placed for a biped holding her child in her arms, is so poorly placed for a quadruped that none has it so placed; that the hindquarters being inordinately high in relation to the forelegs, which is why we drag ourselves around on our knees when we walk on all fours, the whole would have made for an Animal that is ill-proportioned and walks without ease; that if he had set his foot down flat as he does his hand, he would have had one fewer articulation in his hind leg than other animals have, namely that which joins the Canon bone to the Tibia; and that if he set down only the tip of the foot, as he would probably have been constrained to do, the tarsus, even disregarding the many bones that make it up, would seem to be too big to take the place of the canon, and its Articulations with the Metatarsus and the Tibia too close

together to give the human leg in this position the same flexibility as the legs of quadrupeds. The example of Children, taken as it is from an age when natural strengths are not yet developed nor the limbs firm, proves nothing at all, and I would as soon say that dogs are not destined to walk because for several weeks after their birth they only crawl. Moreover, particular facts are of little force against the universal practice of all men, of even those from Nations which, since they had no communication with the others, could not have imitated them in anything. A Child abandoned in some forest before it could walk, and raised by some beast, will have followed its Nurse's example by learning to walk as she does; it could have acquired through habit a dexterity it did not get from Nature; and [*198*] just as One-armed people succeed, by dint of practice, to do with their feet everything we do with our hands, so will it finally have succeeded in using its hands as feet.

Discourse (page 134)

Note IV [1] Should there be among my Readers so poor a Physicist as to raise objections regarding this assumption of the natural fertility of the earth, I shall answer him with the following passage.

[2] "Since plants draw much more substance for their nourishment from air and water than they do from the earth, it happens that when they decay they restore more to the earth than they had drawn from it; besides, a forest regulates rainwater by preventing evaporation. Thus, in a wood left untouched for a long time, the layer of earth that supports vegetation would increase considerably; but since Animals restore less to the earth than they take from it, and men consume enormous quantities of wood and plants for fire and other uses, it follows that in an inhabited country the layer of topsoil must invariably decrease and eventually become like the ground of Arabia Petraea and so many other Provinces of the Orient which, indeed, is the oldest inhabited Clime, and where [now] only Salt and Sand are found; for the fixed Salt of Plants and of Animals remains, while all their other parts are volatilized." M. De Buffon, *Hist*[*oire*] *nat*[*urelle*].

[3] To this may be added the factual proof of the great number of trees and of plants of all kinds that filled almost all the desert islands discovered in recent centuries, and of what history tells us

about the huge forests that had to be cut down everywhere on earth as it was populated or civilized. I shall make the following three additional remarks on this subject. The first is that, if there is a kind of vegetation that could compensate for the depletion of vegetable matter which, according to M. de Buffon's reasoning, is due to animals, then it is mainly woods, the crowns and leaves of which collect and absorb more water and moisture than do other plants. The second is that the destruction of topsoil, that is to say the loss of the substance suited to vegetation, must accelerate in proportion as the earth is more cultivated and as its more industrious inhabitants consume its various productions in greater quantities. My third and most important remark is that the fruits of Trees provide animals with a more abundant supply of food than can other [forms of] vegetation, an experiment I myself performed by comparing the production of two plots of ground equal in size and quality, the one covered with chestnut trees, and the other sown with wheat.

Discourse (page 135)

Note V Among the Quadrupeds the two most universal distinguishing features of the carnivorous species are drawn from the shape of the Teeth, and the conformation of the Intestines. The Animals that live exclusively off vegetation all have blunt teeth, [*199*] like the Horse, the Ox, the Sheep, the Hare; but the Carnivores have them pointed, like the Cat, the Dog, the Wolf, the Fox. As for Intestines, Frugivorous Animals have some, such as the Colon, that are not found among carnivorous Animals. It therefore seems that Man, whose Teeth and Intestines are like those of the Frugivorous Animals, should naturally be placed in that Class, and this opinion is confirmed not only by anatomical observations: but the records of Antiquity also lend it considerable support. "Dicaearchus," says St. Jerome, "relates in his Books on Greek Antiquities that during the reign of Saturn, when the Earth was still fertile on its own, no man ate Flesh, but all lived off the Fruits and the Vegetables that grew naturally" (Bk. II, *Adv[ersus] Jovian[um]*). This opinion may further be bolstered by the accounts of several modern Travelers; François Corréal, among others, reports that most of the inhabitants of the Lucayes whom the Spaniards transported to the Islands of Cuha, Santo Domingo, and elsewhere, died for having

eaten flesh. It is evident from this that I forgo many advantages of which I could avail myself. For since prey is almost the only object about which Carnivores fight, and Frugivores live in constant peace with one another, it is clear that if the human species were of the latter kind, it could have subsisted much more easily in the state of Nature, and would have had much less need and many fewer occasions to leave it.

Discourse (page 135)

Note VI [1] All knowledge requiring reflection, all Knowledge acquired only from chains of ideas and perfected only successively, seems to be altogether beyond the reach of Savage man for want of communication with his kind, that is to say for want of the instrument used in such communication, and of the needs that make it necessary. His knowledge and efforts are restricted to jumping, running, fighting, throwing a stone, climbing a tree. But while these are the only things he knows, he, in return, knows them much better than do we who have not the same need of them as has he; and since these activities depend exclusively on the use of the Body and cannot be communicated or improved from one individual to the next, the first man could have been just as skilled at them as his most remote descendants.

[2] The reports of travelers are filled with examples of the strength and vigor of men from the barbarous and Savage Nations; they scarcely praise their skill and agility any less; and since it takes only eyes to observe these things, there is no reason not to trust what eyewitnesses report on this score. I draw some examples at random from the first books that come to hand. [*200*]

[3] "The Hottentots," says Kolben, "are better at fishing than the Europeans of the Cape. They are equally skilled with net, hook and spear, in bays as in rivers. They are no less skillful at catching fish by hand. They are incomparably adept at swimming. Their way of swimming is somewhat surprising and altogether peculiar to them. They swim with their body upright and their hands stretched out of the water, so that they seem to be walking on land. In the most turbulent sea and when the waves form so many mountains, they dance as it were on the crest of the waves, rising and falling like a piece of cork."

[4] "The Hottentots," the same Author further says, "are surprisingly skilled hunters, and how light they are on their feet passes the imagination." He is surprised at their not putting their skill to bad use more frequently, although they do sometimes do so, as may be judged from the example he gives of it. "A Dutch sailor disembarking at the Cape," he says, "asked a Hottentot to follow him into Town with a roll of tobacco weighing about twenty pounds. When they both were at some distance from the Crew, the Hottentot asked the Sailor whether he could run. Run, the Dutchman answers, yes, quite well. Let us see, replies the African, and escaping with the tobacco, he disappeared almost instantly. The Sailor, dumbfounded by such marvelous speed, gave no thought to pursuing him, and never again saw either his tobacco or his porter.

[5] "They are so quick of eye and sure of band that Europeans do not even come close to them. At a hundred paces they will hit a target the size of a half-penny with a stone, and wbat is most surprising is that instead of fixing their eyes on the target as do we, they make constant movements and contortions. Their stone is as if carried by an invisible hand."

[6] Father du Tertre says about the Savages of the Antilles more or less the same things that have just been read about the Hottentots of the Cape of Good Hope. He mainly praises the accuracy of their shooting with their arrows birds on the wing and swimming fish, which they then retrieve by diving. The Savages of North America are no less famous for their strength and their skill: and here is an example by which to judge of the strength and skill of the Indians of South America.

[7] In the year 1746, an Indian from Buenos Aires, baving been sentenced to the Galleys in Cadiz, proposed to the Governor to buy back his freedom by risking his life at a public festival. He promised to tackle the fiercest Bull single-handed and armed with only a rope, bring it low, grapple it with his rope by any part of the body he would be told to, saddle it, bridle it, ride it, fight thus mounted two more of the fiercest Bulls brought from the Torillo, and put them all [*201*] to death one after the other the moment he was ordered to do so, all without anyone's help; which was granted him. The Indian kept his word and succeeded in everything he had promised; for the way in which he went about it, and the full details of the fight, one can consult the first Volume in 12° of the

Observations sur l'histoire naturelle by M. Gautier, p. 262, whence this fact is taken.

Discourse (page 137)

Note VII "The life-span of Horses is," says M. de Buffon, "as in all other animal species, proportional to the duration of their growth. Man, who takes fourteen years to grow, may live six or seven times that long, that is to say ninety or a hundred years: The Horse, whose growth is completed in four years, may live six or seven times that long, that is to say twenty-five or thirty years. Possible counter-examples to this rule are so rare that they should not even be regarded as exceptions from which to draw conclusions; and since draught horses reach their full size in less time than do riding horses, they also live less long and are old by the time they have reached the age of fifteen."

Discourse (page 137)

Note VIII I believe I see between carnivorous and frugivorous animals another still more general difference than the one I mentioned in Note V, since it applies to birds as well. This difference consists in the number of young, which never exceeds two to a litter in species that live exclusively off vegetation, and generally exceeds that number for carnivorous animals. It is easy to know Nature's destination in this regard by the number of teats, which is only two for every female of the first species, like the Mare, the Cow, the Goat, the Doe, the Ewe, etc., and is always six or eight for the other females, like the Bitch, the Cat, the she-Wolf, the Tigress, etc. The Hen, the Goose, the Duck, all of which are carnivorous Birds, as well as the Eagle, the Sparrow-hawk, the Barn-owl, also lay and hatch a great many eggs, something that never happens in the case of the Pigeon, the Dove, or the Birds that eat absolutely nothing but grain, and generally lay and hatch no more than two eggs at a time. The reason that may account for this difference is that the animals living only off grasses and plants, since they spend almost all day grazing and are forced to spend much time feeding themselves, could not properly suckle many young, whereas carnivores, since they take their meal almost in an instant, can more

easily and more frequently return both to their young and to their hunt, and repair the expense of such a large quantity of Milk. All this calls for many specific observations and reflections; but this is not the place for them, and it is sufficient for me to have shown the most general System of Nature in this part, a System which [202] provides a new reason for removing man from the Class of carnivorous animals and placing him among the frugivorous species.

Discourse (page 141)

Note IX [1] A famous Author, calculating the goods and evils of human life and comparing the two sums, found the last greatly exceeded the first and that, all things considered, life was a rather poor gift for man. I am not at all surprised by his conclusion; he drew all his arguments from the constitution of Civil man: if he had gone back to Natural man, it is likely that he would have reached very different results, that he would have noticed that man suffers scarcely any evils but those he has brought on himself, and that Nature would have been justified. It is not without difficulty that we have succeeded in making ourselves so miserable. When, on the one hand, one considers men's tremendous labors, so many Sciences investigated, so many arts invented, so many forces employed; chasms filled, mountains leveled, rocks split, rivers made navigable, lands cleared, lakes dug, swamps drained, huge buildings erected on land, the sea covered with Ships and Sailors; and when, on the other hand, one inquires with a little meditation into the true advantages that have resulted from all this for the happiness of the human species; one cannot fail to be struck by the astonishing disproportion between these things, and deplore man's blindness which, in order to feed his insane pride and I know not what vain self-admiration, causes him eagerly to run after all the miseries of which he is susceptible, and which beneficent Nature had taken care to keep from him.

[2] Men are wicked; a sad and constant experience makes proof unnecessary; yet man is naturally good, I believe I have proved it; what, then, can have depraved him to this point, if not the changes that occurred in his constitution, the progress he has made, and the knowledge be has acquired? Let human Society be ever so much admired, it remains none the less true that it necessarily moves men

to hate one another in proportion as their interests clash, to render one another apparent services and in effect to do one another every imaginable harm. What is one to think of dealings in which every private person's reason dictates to him maxims directly contrary to those the public reason preaches to the body of Society, and in which everyone profits from the others' misfortune? There is perhaps not a single well-to-do person whom greedy heirs and often his own children do not secretly wish dead; not a Ship at Sea whose wreck would not be good news to some Merchant; not a single commercial house which a dishonest debtor would not like to see burn together with all the papers in it; not a single People that does not rejoice at its neighbors' disasters. This is how we find our advantage in what harms our kind, and how one man's loss almost always makes for another's prosperity [*203*]; but what is more dangerous still is that public calamities are awaited and hoped for by a host of private individuals. Some wish for illnesses, others for death, others for war, others for famine; I have seen horrible men weep in sorrow at the prospects of a good harvest, and the great and deadly London fire, which cost so many unfortunates their lives or their belongings, perhaps made more than ten thousand people's fortune. I know that Montaigne blames the Athenian Demades for having had a Workman punished who, by selling coffins very dear, profited greatly from the death of Citizens: But the reason Montaigne adduces, that everyone would have to be punished, clearly confirms my own. Let us therefore look through our frivolous displays of beneficence to what goes on in the recesses of men's hearts, and reflect on what must be the state of things in which all men are forced both to flatter and to destroy one another, and in which they are born enemies by duty and knaves by interest. If, in return, I am told that Society is so constituted that every man gains by serving the rest; I shall reply that that would all be very well if he did not gain even more by harming them. There is no profit, however legitimate, that is not exceeded by the profit to be made illegitimately, and the wrong done a neighbor is always more lucrative than any services. It therefore only remains to find ways to ensure one's impunity, and this is the end to which the powerful bend all their forces, and the weak all their cunning.

[3] Savage man, once he has supped, is at peace with all of Nature and a friend to all of his kind. Must he sometimes contend for

his meal? He never comes to blows without first having compared the difficulty of prevailing with that of finding his sustenance elsewhere; and since pride has no share in the fight, it ends with a few fisticuffs; the victor eats, the vanquished goes off to seek his fortune, and everything is once again at peace: but with man in Society it is all a very different business; first necessities have to be provided for, and then superfluities; next come delicacies, and then immense wealth, and then subjects, and then Slaves; he has not a moment's respite; what is most singular is that the less natural and urgent the needs, the more the passions increase and, worse still, so does the power to satisfy them; so that after long periods of prosperity, after having swallowed up a good many treasures and ruined a good many men, my Hero will end up by cutting every throat until he is sole master of the Universe. Such, in brief, is the moral picture if not of human life, at least of the secret aspirations of every Civilized man's heart.

[4] Compare without prejudices the state of Civil man with that of Savage man, and determine, if you can, how many new gates in addition to his wickedness, his needs, and his miseries, the first has opened to pain and to death. If you consider the mental pains that consume us, the violent passions that exhaust and waste us, the excessive labors [*204*] that overburden the poor, the even more dangerous softness to which the rich abandon themselves, and cause the first to die of their needs and the others of their excesses. If you think of the horrendous combinations of foods, their noxious seasonings, the spoiled provisions, the adulterated drugs, the villainies of those who sell them, the mistakes of those who administer them, the poisonous Utensils in which they are prepared; if you attend to the epidemics bred by the bad air wherever large numbers of men are gathered together, of those occasioned by the delicacy of our way of living, the to and fro between indoors and out, the use of clothes put on or taken off with too few precautions, and all the cares which our excessive sensuality has turned into necessary habits and which it then costs us our life or our health to neglect or to be deprived of altogether; if you take into account the fires and the earthquakes that consume or topple entire Cities, killing their inhabitants by the thousands; in a word, if you add up the dangers which all of these causes continually gather over our heads, you will sense how dearly Nature makes us pay for the contempt we have shown for its lessons.

[5] I shall not here repeat what I have said elsewhere about war; but I do wish informed people were, for once, willing and ready to tell the public in detail about the horrors committed in armies by the Contractors of food and Hospital supplies; their none-too-secret maneuvers, by which the most brilliant armies fade into less than nothing, would be seen to cause the death of more Soldiers than are mowed down by the enemy's sword. Another and no less shocking calculation is to reckon the number of men yearly swallowed up by the sea as a result of hunger, or scurvy, or Pirates, or fire, or shipwrecks. It is obvious that established property and hence Society must also be held accountable for the murders, poisonings, highway robberies, and even for the punishments of these crimes, punishments necessary in order to prevent greater evils but which, by making the murder of one man cost the lives of two or more, do nevertheless really double the loss to the human species. How many shameful ways there are to prevent the birth of human beings and to cheat Nature: Either by those brutal and depraved tastes that insult its most charming work, tastes which neither Savages nor animals ever knew, and which in civilized countries have arisen only from a corrupt imagination; or by those secret abortions, worthy fruits of debauchery and of a vicious honor, or by the exposure or murder of large numbers of children, the victims of their parents' poverty or their Mothers' barbarous shame; or, finally, by the mutilation of the unfortunates who have a portion of their existence and their entire posterity sacrificed to vain songs or, worse still, to the brutal jealousy of a few men: A mutilation which, in this last case, doubly outrages Nature, [205] in the treatment inflicted on those who suffer it, as well as in the use to which they are destined.

[6] But are there not a thousand even more frequent and more dangerous cases, when paternal rights openly offend humanity? How many talents are buried and inclinations forced by the unwise constraint of Fathers! How many who would have distinguished themselves if they had occupied a suitable position die miserable and dishonored in some other position for which they had no taste! How many happy but unequal marriages have been broken or upset, and how many chaste wives dishonored by an order of [social] conditions forever in contradiction with the order of nature! How many other bizarre unions formed by interest and disowned by love and reason! How many even honest and virtuous husbands and wives

torment one another because they were poorly matched! How many young and unhappy victims of their Parents' greed sink into vice or spend their sad days in tears, and groan in indissoluble bonds which the heart rejects and gold alone forged! Sometimes the fortunate ones are those whose courage and very virtue tear them from life before some barbarous violence forces them to spend it in crime or in despair. Forgive me for it, Father and Mother forever deserving of sorrow: I embitter your suffering reluctantly; but may it serve as an eternal and terrible example to anyone who dares, in the name of nature itself, to violate the most sacred of its rights!

[7] If I have spoken only of the badly formed unions that are the product of our political condition, are the unions over which love and sympathy presided thought to be free of inconveniences? What if I undertook to show the human species assaulted at its very source and even in the most sacred of all ties, ties regarding which one no longer dares to heed Nature until after one has consulted fortune, and with respect to which civil disorder so jumbles virtues and vices that continence becomes a criminal precaution and the refusal to give life to another human being an act of humanity? But without tearing the veil that covers so many horrors, let us leave it at pointing out the evil for which others must provide the remedies.

[8] Add to all this the many unhealthy trades that shorten life or destroy the temperament; such as work in mines, the various treatments of metals and minerals, especially Lead, Copper, Mercury, Cobalt, Arsenic, Realgar; those other perilous trades that daily cost many workers' lives, some of them Roofers, others Carpenters, others Masons, others working in quarries; add up all of these considerations, I say, and it will be evident that the reasons for the decline [in population] of the species that has been noted by more than one Philosopher may be found in the establishment and the perfection of Societies.

[9] Luxury, impossible to prevent among men greedy for their own comfort and other men's consideration, soon completes [*206*] the evil which Societies had begun, and, on the pretext of providing a livelihood for the poor who should never have been made so in the first place, it impoverished everyone else, and sooner or later depopulates the State.

[10] Luxury is a remedy much worse than the evil it claims to cure; or rather, it is itself the worst of all evils in any State, large

or small, and which, in order to feed the hosts of Lackeys and of miserable people it has created, oppresses and ruins both farmer and Citizen; Like those scorching south winds which, blanketing grass and foliage with all-devouring insects, deprive useful animals of their subsistence, and carry famine and death wherever they make themselves felt.

[11] From Society and the luxury which it engenders arise the liberal and the mechanical Arts, Commerce, Letters; and all those useless things that cause industry to flourish, and enrich and ruin States. The reason for this decline is very simple. It is easy to see that agriculture must, by its nature, be the least lucrative of all the arts; for since the use of its product is the most indispensable to all men, its price must be proportioned to the poorest men's capacity [to pay]. From this same principle the following rule may be derived, that in general the Arts are lucrative in inverse proportion to their usefulness, and that those that are most needed must in the end become the most neglected. Which shows what one should think regarding the true advantages of industry and the real effect that results from its progress.

[12] Such are the perceptible causes of all the miseries into which opulence in the end plunges the most admired Nations. As industry and the arts spread and flourish, the scorned farmer, weighed down by taxes needed to support Luxury, and condemned to spend his life between labor and hunger, abandons his fields to go look in the Cities for the bread he should be taking to them. The more the stupid eyes of the People are struck with admiration by capital cities, the more one must bemoan to see the Countryside abandoned, the fields lie fallow, and the highways overrun by unfortunate Citizens turned beggars or thieves and destined someday to end their misery on the wheel or a dunghill. This is how the State, while it grows rich on the one hand, gets weak and depopulated on the other, and how the most powerful Monarchies, after much labor to grow opulent and become deserted, end up by being the prey of the poor Nations that succumb to the fatal temptation to invade them, and grow rich and weak in their turn, until they are themselves invaded and destroyed by others.

[13] Let someone deign to explain to us for once what could have produced those swarms of Barbarians who for so many centuries swept over Europe, Asia, and Africa? Was it to the quality of their

Arts, the Wisdom of their Laws, the excellence of their polity, that they owed this enormous population? Let our learned men kindly tell us why, instead of multiplying to such an extent, these ferocious and brutal men, lacking enlightenment, lacking restraints, lacking education, were not forever killing each other off over their pastures or [207] their hunting grounds? Let them explain to us how these miserable people could have had the audacity to look in the eye such clever people as we ourselves were, with such fine military discipline, such fine Codes, and such wise Laws? Finally, why is it that, ever since Society was perfected in the countries of the North and they went to such trouble there to teach men their mutual duties and the art of living together pleasantly and peacefully, nothing like the great numbers of men it used to produce is any longer seen to come from there? I rather fear that it might finally occur to someone to answer me that all these great things, to wit the Arts, the Sciences, and the Laws, were most Wisely invented by men as a Salutary plague to prevent the excessive increase of the species, for fear that this world, which is destined for us, might in the end become too small for its inhabitants.

[14] What, then? Must Societies be destroyed, thine and mine annihilated, and men return to live in forests with the Bears? A conclusion in the style of my adversaries, which I would rather anticipate than leave them the shame of drawing it. O you, to whom the celestial voice has not made itself heard, and who recognize no other destination for your species than to end this short life in peace; you who are able to leave behind in the Cities your fatal acquisitions, your restless minds, your corrupted hearts, and your unbridled desires; resume your ancient and first innocence since it is in your power to do so; go into the woods to lose the sight and memory of your contemporaries' crimes, and do not fear that you are debasing your species when you renounce its enlightenment in order to renounce its vices. As for men like myself, whose passions have forever destroyed their original simplicity, who can no longer subsist on grass and acorns, nor do without Laws or Chiefs; Those who were honored in their first Father with supernatural lessons; those who will see in the intention of giving to human actions from the first a morality which they would not have acquired for a long time, the reason for a precept indifferent in itself and inexplicable in any other System: Those, in a word, who are convinced that the

divine voice called all Mankind to the enlightenment and the happiness of the celestial Intelligences; all of them will try, by practicing the virtues they obligate themselves to perform as they learn to know them, to deserve the eternal prize they must expect for it; they will respect the sacred bonds of the Societies of which they are members; they will love their kind and serve them with all their power; they will scrupulously obey the Laws and the men who are their Authors and their Ministers; they will honor above all the good and wise Princes who will know how to forestall, cure, and palliate the host of abuses and of evils that are forever ready to overwhelm us; They will animate the zeal of these worthy Chiefs by showing them, without fear or flattery, the grandeur of their task and the rigor of their duty; But they will be none the less contemptuous of a constitution that can be maintained only with the help of so many respectable people more often wished [*208*] for than available, and from which, in spite of all their cares, there always arise more real calamities than apparent advantages.

Discourse (page 142)

Note X [1] Of the men we know, either for ourselves, or from Historians, or from travelers; some are black, others white, others red; some wear their hair long, others have nothing but curly wool; some are almost entirely covered with hair, others have not even any on their Face; there have been, and perhaps there still are, Nations of men of gigantic size; and, leaving aside the fable about Pygmies which may well be no more than an exaggeration, the Laplanders and especially the Greenlanders are known to be well below the average size for man; it is even claimed that there are entire Peoples with tails like quadrupeds; and, without placing blind faith in the accounts of Herodotus and of Ctesias, one can at least draw the following very plausible conclusion from them, that, if good observations had been possible in those ancient times when different peoples differed in their ways of life more than they do today, then much more striking varieties in bodily shape and bearing would also have been noted among them. All these facts, of which it is easy to provide incontrovertible proofs, can surprise only those who are in the habit of looking exclusively at the objects around them, and are ignorant of the powerful effects of differences

in Climates, air, foods, ways of life, habits in general and, above all, of the astonishing force of uniform causes acting continuously on long successions of generations. Nowadays, when commerce, Travels and conquests bring different Peoples closer together, and their ways of life grow constantly more alike as a result of frequent communication, certain national differences are found to have diminished and, for example, everyone can see that present-day Frenchmen are no longer the tall, fair-skinned and blond-haired bodies described by Latin Historians, although time, together with the admixture of Franks and Normans, who are themselves fair and blond, should have made up for whatever the contact with the Romans may have taken away from the influence of the Climate on the population's natural constitution and complexion. All these observations about the varieties which a thousand causes may produce, and indeed have produced in the human Species, lead me to wonder whether various animals similar to men, which travelers have without much observation taken for Beasts, either because of some differences they noticed in their outward conformation, or merely because these Animals did not speak, might not indeed be genuine Savage men whose race, dispersed in the woods in ancient times, had had no occasion to develop any of its virtual faculties, had not acquired any degree of perfection, and was still in the primitive state of Nature. Let us give an example of what I mean. [209]

[2] "In the Kingdom of the Congo," says the translator of the Hist[oire] des Voyages, "are found many of those big Animals called *Orang-Outangs* in the East Indies, which occupy something like a middle position between the human species and the Baboons. Battel relates that in the forests of Mayomba, in the Kingdom of Loango, two kinds of Monsters are found, the larger of which are called *Pongos*, and the others *Enjokos*. The first hear an exact resemblance to man; but they are much heavier and quite tall. Together with a human face, they have very deep-set eyes. Their hands, cheeks, ears are hairless, except for their rather long eyebrows. Although the rest of their body is rather hairy, this body hair does not grow especially dense, and it is of a dunnish color. Finally, the only feature that distinguishes them from men is their leg, which is without a calf. They walk upright, with the hand holding one another by the hair of the Neck; they live in the woods; They sleep in Trees

where they build themselves a kind of roof that protects them from rain. Their food is fruit or Wild nuts. They never eat flesh. The Negroes who travel through the forests are in the habit of lighting fires at night. They notice that in the morning, when they have left, the Pongos take their place around the fire, and do not leave it until it has died out: for although they are very dexterous, they have not sense enough to keep the fire going by adding wood to it.

[3] "Sometimes they walk in troops and kill Negroes making their way through the forests. They even attack elephants that come to graze in the places where they live, and make it so uncomfortable for them by striking them with their fists or with sticks that they force them to run away roaring. Pongos are never taken alive; because they are so sturdy that ten men would not be enough to stop them: But the Negroes do take many of their Young after having killed the Mother to whose Body the little one clings fast: when one of these Animals dies, the others cover its body with a Heap of branches or boughs. Purchas adds that in the conversations he had had with Battel, he learned from him that a Pongo had kidnapped a little Negro from him, who spent a whole month in the Society of these Animals; For they do no harm whatever to the human beings they surprise, at least not when these do not look at them, as the little Negro had observed. Battel did not describe the second species of monster.

[4] "Dapper confirms that the Kingdom of the Congo is full of the animals called Orang-Outangs, that is to say inhabitants of the woods, in the Indies, and Quojas-Morros by the Africans. This Beast, he says, is so similar to man that it has entered the mind of some travelers that it might have been the offspring of a woman and a monkey: a chimera dismissed even by the Negroes. One of these animals was brought from the Congo to Holland and presented to Prince Frederick-Henry of Orange. [*210*] It was as tall as a three-Year old Child and of moderate girth, but square and well-proportioned, quite agile and quite lively; its legs fleshy and sturdy, the front of its body bare, but the back covered with black hair. At first sight its face resembled that of a man, but its nose was flat and snubbed; its ears, too, were those of the human Species; its breast, for it was a female, was plump, its navel deep-set, its shoulders nicely articulated, its hands divided into fingers and thumbs, its calves and heels fat and fleshy. It often walked upright on its legs,

it could lift and carry rather heavy loads. When it wanted to drink it took the cover of the pot with one hand and held the bottom with the other. Afterwards it gracefully wiped its lips. It lay down to sleep, its head on a Pillow, covering itself so skillfully that it might have been mistaken for a human being in bed. The Negroes tell strange tales about this animal. They maintain not only that it takes women and girls by force, but that it dares to attack armed men; In a word, it is quite likely that it is the Satyr of the Ancients. Perhaps Merolla is only referring to these Animals when he relates that Negroes sometimes capture Savage men and women in their hunts."

[5] These species of Anthropomorphic animals are mentioned again in the third volume of the same Histoire des Voyages under the names *Beggos* and *Mandrills*; but restricting ourselves to the preceding accounts, one finds in the description of these supposed monsters striking conformities with the human species, and smaller differences than might be pointed to between one human being and another. It is not clear from these passages what the Authors' reasons are for refusing to call the Animals in question Savage men, but it is easy to conjecture that it is because of their stupidity, and also because they did not speak; weak reasons for those who know that, although the organ of speech is natural to man, speech itself is nevertheless not natural to him, and who recognize the extent to which his perfectibility may have raised Civil man above his original state. The small number of lines comprising these descriptions permits us to judge how poorly these Animals have been observed, and with what prejudices they were seen. For example, they are characterized as monsters, and yet it is conceded that they reproduce. In one place Battel says that the Pongos kill the Negroes traveling through the forest, in another place Purchas adds that they do them no harm even when they surprise them; at least not when the Negroes do not insist on looking at them. The Pongos gather around the fires lit by the Negroes once these have left, and they leave in turn once the fire has died out; that is the fact; here, now, is the observer's commentary: ***For although they are very dexterous, they have not sense enough to keep the fire going by adding wood to it.*** I should like to fathom how Battel, or Purchas, his [*211*] compiler, could have known that the Pongos' departure was an effect of their stupidity rather than of their will. In a Climate such as that of

Loango, fire is not something Animals particularly need, and if Negroes light them, they do so less against the cold than to frighten ferocious beasts; it is therefore perfectly plain that after having been cheered by the flames for a while or having thoroughly warmed up, the Pongos grow bored with always staying in one place, and go off to forage, which requires more time than if they ate flesh. Besides, the majority of animals, not excepting man, are known to be naturally lazy, and they shun every kind of care that is not absolutely necessary. Finally, it seems very strange that the Pongos, whose dexterity and strength is extolled, the Pongos who know how to bury their dead and how to make themselves roofs out of branches, should not know how to push embers into a fire. I remember having seen a monkey perform the same operation which it is claimed the Pongos cannot perform; it is true that, as my ideas were not at the time turned in that direction, I myself committed the mistake for which I blame our travelers, and I neglected to examine whether it had indeed been the monkey's intention to keep the fire going, or whether it had simply been, as I believe, to imitate the action of a human being. Be that as it may; it is well demonstrated that the Monkey is not a variety of man; not only because it is deprived of the faculty of speech, but especially because it is certain that this species lacks the faculty of perfecting itself which is the specific characteristic of the human species. Experiments seem not to have been conducted sufficiently carefully with the Pongo and the Orang-Outang to allow the same conclusion to be drawn regarding them. However, if the Orang-Outang or others did belong to the human species, there would be one way in which the crudest observers could satisfy themselves on the question even with a demonstration; but not only would a single generation not suffice for this experiment, it must also be regarded as impracticable because what is but an assumption would have to have been demonstrated as true before the test to confirm the fact could be tried in innocence.

[6] Precipitous judgments that are not the fruit of an enlightened reason are liable to run to extremes. Our travelers do not hesitate to make beasts by the name of *Pongos, Mandrills, Orang-Outangs* of the same beings which the Ancients made into Divinities by the name of *Satyrs, Fauns*, and *Sylvans*. Perhaps after more accurate investigations it will be found that they are neither beasts nor gods, but men. In the meantime it seems to me quite as reasonable to rely

in this matter on Merolla, a learned Cleric, an eyewitness, and a man who, for all his naïveté, was intelligent, as on the Merchant Battel, on Dapper, on Purchas, and the other Compilers. [*212*]

[7] What would have been the judgment of such Observers about the Child found in 1694, of whom I have already spoken above, who gave no sign of reason, walked on his hands and feet, had no language, and formed sounds in no way resembling those of a man. It took him a long time, continues the same Philosopher who provides me with this fact, before he could utter a few words, and then he did so in a barbarous manner. As soon as he could speak, he was questioned about his first state, but he no more remembered it than we remember what happened to us in the Cradle. If, unfortunately for him, this child had fallen into our travelers' hands, there can be no doubt that after taking note of his silence and stupidity, they would have decided to send him back into the woods or to lock him up in a Menagerie; after which they would have spoken about him learnedly in fine reports as a most curious Beast that rather resembled a man.

[8] Although the inhabitants of Europe have for the past three or four hundred years overrun the other parts of the world and are constantly publishing new collections of travels and reports, I am convinced that the only men we know are the Europeans; what is more, it would seem that, judging by the ridiculous prejudices that have not died out even among Men of Letters, very nearly all anyone does under the pompous heading of the study of man is to study the men of his country. Regardless of how much individuals may come and go, it would seem that Philosophy does not travel, and indeed each People's Philosophy is ill-suited for another. It is clear why this should be so, at least with respect to faraway places: there are scarcely more than four sorts of men who make extended journeys: Sailors, Merchants, Soldiers and Missionaries. Now it is scarcely to be expected that the first three Classes would provide good Observers, and as for those in the fourth, even if they are not subject to the same prejudices of station as are all the others, one has to believe that, absorbed by the sublime vocation that calls them, they would not readily engage in inquiries that appear to be matters of pure curiosity and would distract them from the labors to which they have dedicated themselves. Besides, to preach the Gospel usefully requires only zeal, and God grants the rest; bot to study men

requires talents which God does not commit himself to grant to anyone, and which are not always the lot of Saints. One cannot open a travel book without coming upon descriptions of characters and morals; yet one is utterly astounded to find that these people who have described so many things have said only what everybody already knew, that all they were able to perceive at the other end of the world is what they could perfectly well have observed without leaving their street, and that the telling traits that differentiate Nations and strike eyes made to see have almost always escaped theirs. Hence that fine adage of ethics so much harped on by the ruck of Philosophasters, that men are everywhere the same, that, since they everywhere have the same passions and the same vices, it is quite useless to seek to characterize [*213*] different Peoples; which is about as well argued as it would be to say that it is impossible to distinguish between Peter and James because both have a nose, a mouth, and eyes.

[9] Shall we never see reborn the happy times when Peoples did not pretend to Philosophize, but the Platos, the Thales, and the Pythagorases, seized with an ardent desire to know, undertook the greatest journeys merely in order to learn, and went far off to shake the yoke of National prejudices, to get to know men by their conformities and their differences, and to acquire that universal knowledge that is not exclusively of one Century or one country but of all times and all places, and thus is, so to speak, the common science of the wise?

[10] One admires the largess of a few men who, animated by curiosity, have at great expense made or sponsored voyages to the Orient with Learned men and Painters, there to make drawings of ruins and to decipher or copy Inscriptions; but I find it difficult to conceive how, in a Century that prides itself on remarkable knowledge, there are not two like-minded men, rich, one in money and the other in genius, both loving glory and aspiring to immortality, one of whom would sacrifice twenty thousand crowns of his fortune and the other ten years of his life for the sake of a notable voyage around the world; during which to study, not forever stones and plants, but, for once, men and morals, and who, after so many centuries spent measuring and examining the house, finally decided that they want to know its inhabitants.

[11] The Academicians who have traveled through the Northern parts of Europe and the Southern parts of America were more

intent on visiting them as Geometers than as Philosophers. However, since they were both at once, the regions seen and described by such men as La Condamine and Maupertuis cannot be regarded as altogether unknown. The Jeweller Chardin, who traveled like Plato, has left nothing more to be said about Persia; China seems to have been well observed by the Jesuits; Kaempfer gives a tolerable idea of the little he saw in Japan. Except for these accounts, we do not know the Peoples of the East Indies, who are exclusively visited by Europeans more interested in filling their purses than their heads. All of Africa and its numerous inhabitants, as remarkable in character as they are in color, still remain to be studied; the whole earth is covered with Nations of which we know only the names, and yet we pretend to judge mankind! Let us suppose a Montesquieu, a Buffon, a Diderot, a Duclos, a d'Alembert, a Condillac, or men of that stamp, traveling with a view to instruct their compatriots, observing and describing as they do so well, Turkey, Egypt, Barbary, the Empire of Morocco, Guinea, the lands of the Bantus, the interior and the East coasts of Africa, the Malabars, Mongolia, the banks of the Ganges, the Kingdoms of Siam, Pegu and Ava, China, Tartary, and above all Japan: then, in the other [*214*] Hemisphere, Mexico, Peru, Chile, the Lands [around the Straits] of Magellan, without forgetting the Patagonians, true or false, Tucumán, Paraguay if possible, Brazil, finally the Caribbean, Florida, and all the Wild regions, this being the most important voyage of all and the one that should be undertaken with the greatest care; let us suppose that on their return from these memorable travels, these new Hercules set down at leisure the natural, moral and political history of what they had seen, then we would ourselves see a new world issue from their pen, and would thus learn to know our own: I say that when such Observers assert about a given Animal that it is a man and about another that it is a beast, they will have to be believed; but it would be most simpleminded to rely in this matter on coarse travelers about whom one might sometimes be tempted to ask the same question they pretend to answer about other animals.

Discourse (page 142)

Note XI This seems perfectly evident to me, and I cannot conceive where our Philosophers would have arise all the passions they

attribute to Natural man. With the single exception of the Physically necessary, which Nature itself requires, all our other needs are needs only by habit, prior to which they were not needs, or by our desires, and one does not desire what one is not in a position to know. Whence it follows that, since Savage man desires only the things he knows, and knows only the things the possession of which is in his power or easy to achieve, nothing must be so calm as his soul and nothing so limited as his mind.

Discourse (page 145)

Note XII [1] I find in Locke's Civil Government an objection that seems to me too specious to permit me to ignore it. "The end of society between Male and Female," says this philosopher, "being not barely procreation, but the continuation of the species; this society ought to last, even after procreation, so long as is necessary to the nourishment and support of the young ones, who are to be sustained by those that got them, till they are able to shift and provide for themselves. This rule, which the infinite wisdom of the creator hath set to the works of his hands, we find the creatures inferior to man steadily and precisely obey. In those animals which feed on grass, the Society between male and female lasts no longer than the very act of copulation; because the teat of the Dam being sufficient to nourish the young, till they be able to graze the grass, the male only begets, but concerns not himself for the female or young, to whose sustenance he can contribute nothing. But in beasts of prey the Society lasts longer: because the Dam not being able well to subsist herself, and nourish her offspring by her own prey alone, [*215*] a more laborious, as well as more dangerous way of feeding than by feeding on grass, the assistance of the male is necessary to the maintenance of their common family, if one may use the term, which cannot subsist till they are able to prey for themselves, but by the care of Male and Female. The same is to be observed in all birds, except some Domestic ones, where plenty of food excuses the cock from feeding the young brood; it is to be observed that while the young in their nest need food, the male and the female take some there, till the young are able to use their wing, and provide for themselves.

[2] "And herein I think lies the chief, if not the only reason why the male and female in Mankind are obliged to a longer Society than other creatures. The reason is that the Woman is capable of conceiving and is commonly with child again, and brings forth too a new birth long before the former is out of a dependency for support on his parents' help, and able to shift for himself, and has all the assistance due to him from his parents. Whereby the Father, who is obliged to take care for those he hath begot, and to do so for a long time, is also under an obligation to continue in conjugal Society with the same woman from whom he had them, and to remain in that Society much longer than other creatures, whose young being able to subsist of themselves, before the time of procreation returns again, the bond between the male and the female dissolves of itself, and they are fully at liberty, till the season which customarily summons animals to join together, obliges them again to choose new mates. Wherein one cannot but admire the wisdom of the creator who having given to man foresight, and an ability to lay up for the future, as well as to supply the present necessity, wanted and arranged it so that Society of man should be much more lasting, than of male and female amongst the other creatures; that so their industry might be encouraged, and their interest better united, to make provision, and lay up goods for their common issue, as nothing is more prejudicial to Children than uncertain and vague mixture, or easy and frequent dissolutions of conjugal Society."

[3] The same love of truth that led me to present this objection in all sincerity, moves me to accompany it with a few remarks in order, if not to refute it, at least to elucidate it.

[4] 1. In the first place, I shall note that moral proofs are without great force in matters of Physics, and that they serve rather to provide reasons for existing facts than to ascertain the real existence of these facts. Yet this is the kind of proof Mr. Locke uses in the passage I have just cited; for although it may be [*216*] advantageous to the human species that the union between man and woman be permanent, it does not follow that it was so established by Nature; otherwise it would have to be said that Nature also instituted Civil Society, the Arts, Commerce, and everything that is claimed to be useful to men.

[5] 2. I do not know where Mr. Locke found that the Society of Male and Female lasts longer among animals of prey than among

those that live off grass, and that [among them] one helps the other to feed the young: For it does not appear that the Dog, the Cat, the Bear, or the Wolf recognize their female better than the Horse, the Ram, the Bull, the Stag, or all other Quadrupeds recognize theirs. It would seem, on the contrary, that if the female did need the male's assistance to preserve her young, this would be so above all in the species that live exclusively off grass, because the Mother needs much time to graze, and during that whole stretch she is forced to neglect her brood, whereas a female Bear's or Wolf's prey is devoured in an instant, and she has more time to suckle her young without suffering from hunger. This reasoning is confirmed by an observation about the relative number of teats and of young which distinguishes the carnivorous from the frugivorous species, and about which I spoke in Note VIII. If that observation is correct and general, then a woman's having only two teats and rarely giving birth to more than one child at a time is one more strong reason for doubting that the human species is naturally Carnivorous, so that it would seem that in order to draw Locke's conclusion, his argument would have to be turned completely upside down. This same distinction is no more solid when applied to birds. For who can believe that the union of Male and Female is more lasting among vultures and Ravens than among Turtle-doves? We have two species of domestic birds, the Duck and the Pigeon, that provide us with examples directly contrary to this Author's System. The Pigeon, which lives exclusively off grain, remains united with its female, and they feed their young in common. The Duck, whose omnivorousness is well known, recognizes neither its female nor its young, and does not in any way help with their subsistence; and among Chickens, a species scarcely less carnivorous, there is no evidence that the Cock worries about the brood at all. If in other species of birds the Male does share with the Female the care of feeding the young, it is because Birds, which cannot fly at first and which their Mother cannot suckle, are much less able to do without the Father's assistance than Quadrupeds, where the Mother's teat suffices, at least for a time.

[6] 3. A good deal of uncertainty surrounds the principal fact which serves as the basis for Mr. Locke's entire argument: For in order to know whether, as he claims, in the pure state of Nature the woman is commonly with child again and brings forth too a

new birth long before the former is able to shift for himself, would require experiments which Locke has surely not performed, and which no [*217*] one is in a position to perform. The continual cohabitation of Husband and Wife provides such direct occasion to expose oneself to a new pregnancy that it is rather difficult to believe that fortuitous encounters or the impulsion of temperament alone would have produced as frequent effects in the pure state of Nature as in that of conjugal Society; a delay which might perhaps contribute to the children's becoming more robust and might, besides, be compensated for by [having] the faculty to conceive extended to a more advanced age in women who abused it less in their youth. Regarding Children, there are a good many reasons to believe that their strength and their organs develop later among us than they did in the primitive state of which I speak. The original weakness they owe to their Parents' constitution, the care taken to swaddle and cramp all their limbs, the softness in which they are reared, perhaps the use of another milk than their Mother's, everything thwarts and delays in them the first progress of Nature. Their being obliged to mind a thousand things to which their attention is constantly being drawn while their bodily strength is not given any exercise may further considerably hamper their growth; it is therefore likely that if, instead of their minds being first overloaded and tired in a thousand ways, their Bodies were allowed to move as actively and constantly as Nature seems to expect them to do, they would be able to walk, act, and fend for themselves much earlier.

[7] 4. Finally, Mr. Locke at most proves that the man might well have a motive for remaining attached to the woman when she has a Child; but he does not at all prove that he must have been attached to her before its birth and during the nine months of pregnancy. If a given woman is of no interest to a man for these nine months, if he ceases even to know her, why will he help her after the birth? Why will he help her rear a Child he does not even know is his, and whose birth he neither willed nor foresaw? Mr. Locke obviously presupposes what is in question: For it is not a matter of knowing why a man remains attached to a woman after the birth, but why he gets attached to her after the conception. Once the appetite is satisfied, the man no longer needs this woman, nor the woman this man. He has not the least concern nor perhaps the least idea of the consequences of his action. One goes off in this direction, the other

in that, and it is not likely that at the end of nine months they will remember ever having known each other: For the kind of memory by which an individual gives preference to an individual for the act of procreation requires, as I prove in the text, more progress or corruption of the human understanding than it can be assumed to have in the state of animality that is at issue here. Another woman can, therefore, satisfy a man's new desires as readily as the woman he had previously known, and another man can similarly satisfy [218] the woman, assuming she is goaded by the same appetite during the state of pregnancy, which may reasonably be doubted. If, in the state of Nature, the woman no longer experiences the passion of love after the child has been conceived, then the obstacle to her Society with the man becomes much greater still, since she then no longer needs either the man who impregnated her or any other. There is, therefore, no reason for the man to seek out the same woman, nor for the woman to seek out the same man. Locke's argument therefore collapses, and all of that Philosopher's Dialectic has not protected him against the error Hobbes and others committed. They had to explain a fact of the state of Nature, that is to say of a state where men lived isolated, and where a given man had no motive whatsoever to stay by some other given man, nor perhaps did men have any motive to stay by one another, which is far worse; and it did not occur to them to look back beyond Centuries of Society, that is to say beyond the times when men always have a reason to stay close to one another, and a given man often has a reason to stay by the side of a given man or woman.

Discourse (page 146)

Note XIII I do not propose to embark on the philosophical reflections that might be made regarding the advantages and the inconveniences of this institution of languages; I am not one to be granted leave to attack vulgar errors, and the lettered folk respect their prejudices too much to tolerate my supposed paradoxes with patience. Let us therefore let speak the Persons in whom it has not been deemed a Crime to dare sometimes to take the side of reason against the opinion of the multitude. "Nor would the happiness of mankind be in any way diminished if, after the evil and the confusion of so many languages has been banished, [all] mortals eagerly

practiced [this] one art, and everything were allowed to be expressed in signs, movements, and gestures. But as things now stand, the condition of animals, which are commonly held to be dumb, appears in this respect to be much better than ours, for they can make their feelings and thoughts known without an interpreter, faster and perhaps more felicitously than any men can do, especially when they are speaking a foreign language" (Is[aac] Vossius, de Poemat[um] Cant[u] et Viribus Rythmi, p. 66).

Discourse (page 149)

Note XIV Plato, showing how necessary ideas of discrete quantity and its relations are in the least of arts, rightly mocks the Authors of his time who claimed that Palamedes had invented numbers at the siege of Troy, as if, says that Philosopher, Agamemnon could until then have been ignorant of how many legs he had. Indeed, one senses how impossible it is for society and the arts to have reached the level they already were at by the time of the siege of Troy, without men's having the use of numbers and of reckoning: but the fact that a knowledge of numbers is necessary before other knowledge can be acquired does not make it any easier to imagine how numbers were invented; once their names are known, it is easy to explain their meaning, and to evoke the ideas which these names [*219*] represent; but in order to invent them, and before conceiving of these very ideas, one had, so to speak, to have become adept at philosophical meditation, to have practiced considering the beings exclusively in their essence, and independently of all other perception, an abstraction that is very arduous, very metaphysical, not very natural, and yet without which these ideas could never have been transposed from one species or kind to another, nor numbers have become universal. A savage could separately consider his right leg and his left leg, or view them together in terms of the indivisible idea of a pair, without ever thinking that he had two of them; for the representative idea that depicts an object to us is one thing, and the numerical idea that specifies it is another. Still less could he count up to five, and although by fitting his hands one to the other he could have noticed that the fingers matched exactly, he was far from dreaming of their numerical equality; he no more knew the number of his fingers than of his hairs; and if, after having made

him understand what numbers are, someone had told him that he had as many toes as fingers, he might perhaps have been very surprised, on comparing them, to find it true.

Discourse (page 152)

Note XV [1] *Amour propre* [vanity] and *Amour de soi-même* [self-love], two very different passions in their nature and their effects, should not be confused. Self-love is a natural sentiment which inclines every animal to attend to its self-preservation and which, guided in man by reason and modified by pity, produces humanity and virtue. Amour propre is only a relative sentiment, factitious, and born in society, which inclines every individual to set greater store by himself than by anyone else, inspires men with all the evils they do one another, and is the genuine source of honor.

[2] This being clearly understood, I say that in our primitive state, in the genuine state of nature, Amour propre does not exist; For, since every individual human being views himself as the only Spectator to observe him, as the only being in the universe to take any interest in him, as the only judge of his own merit, it is not possible that a sentiment which originates in comparisons he is not capable of making, could spring up in his soul: for the same reason, this man could have neither hatred nor desire for vengeance, passions that can arise only from the opinion of having received some offense; and since it is contempt or the intent to harm, and not the harm itself, that constitutes the offense, men who are unable to appreciate one another or to compare themselves with one another can do each other much violence when there is some advantage in it for them, without ever offending one another. In a word, every man viewing his kind scarcely differently from the way he would view Animals of another species, can rob the weaker of his prey or yield his own to the stronger without considering these acts of pillage as anything but [220] natural occurrences, without the slightest stirring of arrogance or resentment, and with no other passion than the pain or pleasure at success or failure.

Discourse (page 167)

Note XVI [1] It is most remarkable that for all the years the Europeans have been tormenting themselves to bring the Savages of the

various parts of the world around to their way of life, they should not yet have been able to win over a single one of them, not even with the help of Christianity; for our missionaries sometimes make Christians of them, but never Civilized men. Nothing can overcome their invincible repugnance against adopting our morals and living in our way. If these poor Savages are as unhappy as they are said to be, by what inconceivable depravation of judgment do they consistently refuse either to adopt political society in imitation of us, or to learn to live happy among us; whereas, one reads in a thousand places that Frenchmen and other Europeans have voluntarily taken refuge among these Nations, spent their entire lives there, unable any longer to leave such a strange way of life, and one even finds sensible Missionaries regretting with emotion the calm and innocent days they spent among those much despised peoples? If it be answered that they are not sufficiently enlightened to judge soundly of their state and of ours, I will reply that the assessment of happiness is less the business of reason than of sentiment. Besides, this answer can be turned against us with even greater force; for the distance is greater between our ideas and the frame of mind required to appreciate the Savages' taste for their way of life, than between the Savages' ideas and the ideas that might enable them to conceive of our way of life. Indeed, after a few observations they can readily see that all our labors are directed at only two objects: namely, the comforts of life for oneself, and consideration from others. But how are we to imagine the sort of pleasure a Savage takes in spending his life alone in the depths of the forests, or fishing, or blowing into a poor flute without ever managing to draw a single note from it and without troubling to learn to do so?

[2] On a number of occasions, Savages have been brought to Paris, London, and other cities; people have scurried to spread out before them our luxury, our wealth, and all of our most useful and most interesting arts; all this never excited in them anything other than a stupid admiration, without the slightest stirring of covetousness. I remember, among others, the Story of a chief of some North Americans who was brought to the Court of England about thirty years ago. He was shown a thousand things in search of some present he might like, without anything being found that he seemed to care for. Our weapons seemed to him heavy and clumsy, our shoes hurt his feet, he found our clothes cumbersome, he rejected

everything; finally it was noticed that, having picked up a wool blanket, he seemed to take pleasure in wrapping it around his shoulders; [*221*] you will at least allow, someone straightway said to him, the usefulness of this furnishing? Yes, he answered, it seems to me almost as good as an animal skin. He would not even have said that, if he had worn them both in the rain.

[3] I will perhaps be told that it is habit which, by attaching everyone to his way of life, prevents Savages from feeling what is good in ours: And on this basis it must, to say the least, appear very extraordinary that habit should prove stronger in preserving the Savages' taste for their misery than the Europeans' enjoyment of their felicity. But to meet this last objection with an answer that admits of not a single word in reply – without invoking all the young Savages whom vain efforts have been made to Civilize; without speaking of the Greenlanders or of the inhabitants of Iceland whom attempts have been made to raise and rear in Denmark, and all of whom died of sorrow and despair, either from yearning, or in the sea across which they had tried to swim back to their country – I shall limit myself to citing a single well attested example which I submit to the scrutiny of admirers of the European Political order.

[4] "All the efforts of the Dutch Missionaries of the Cape of Good Hope never Succeeded in converting a single Hottentot. Van der Stel, Governor of the Cape, having taken one of them in infancy, had him brought up in the principles of the Christian Religion and in the observance of European customs. He was richly dressed, taught several languages, and his progress fully corresponded to the care taken with his education. The Governor, expecting much from his mind, sent him to India with a Commissioner-General who employed him usefully in the Company's business. After the Commissioner's death, he returned to the Cape. A few days after his return, during a visit to some Hottentot relatives of his, he decided to divest himself of his European garb and dress in a Sheepskin. He returned to the Fort in this new garb, carrying a package with his former clothes, and presenting them to the Governor, he addressed this discourse to him.* *Be so good, Sir, as to note that I forever renounce these trappings. I also renounce the Christian Religion for the rest of my life; my resolution is to live and*

* See the frontispiece [p. 112].

die in the Religion, the ways, and the customs of my Ancestors. The one favor I ask of you is to leave me the Necklace and the Cutlass I am wearing. I shall keep them for love of you. Straightway, without awaiting Van der Stel's reply, he ran off, and was never again seen at the Cape." *Histoire des Voyages*, vol. 5, p. 175.

Discourse (page 172)

Note XVII It might be objected that amid such a disorder, men, instead of stubbornly slaughtering one another, would have dispersed if there had been no limits on their [*222*] dispersion. But, in the first place, these limits would at least have been those of the world, and if one thinks of the excessively large population that results from the state of Nature, one has to conclude that, in that state, the earth would soon have been covered with men forced in this way to remain assembled. Besides, they would have dispersed if the evil had been swift, and the change had taken place from one day to the next; but they were born under the yoke; by the time they felt its weight, they were in the habit of bearing it, and left it at waiting for the opportunity to shake it off. Finally, already accustomed to a thousand comforts that forced them to remain assembled, dispersion was no longer as easy as in the first times when, no one needing anyone but himself, everyone made his decision without waiting for anyone else's consent.

Discourse (page 173)

Note XVIII Marshal de V*** related that in one of his Campaigns, when the excessive frauds of a Food Contractor had caused suffering and grumbling in the army, he roundly took the man to task and threatened to have him hanged. The threat does not bother me, the scoundrel brashly replied, and I am pleased to tell you that a man with a hundred thousand crowns at his disposal does not get hanged. I do not know how it happened, the Marshal naïvely added, but he was indeed not hanged, although he deserved it a hundred times.

Discourse (page 183)

Note XIX Distributive justice itself would be at odds with the rigorous equality of the state of Nature, even if it were practicable in

civil society; and as all the members of the State owe it services proportionate to their talents and forces, Citizens ought, in return, to be distinguished and favored in proportion to their services. It is in this sense that a passage in Isocrates has to be understood, in which he praises the first Athenians for having correctly discerned the more advantageous of the two sorts of equality, one of which consists in allotting the same advantages to all Citizens indifferently, and the other in distributing them according to each one's merit. These skillful politicians, adds the orator, by banishing the unjust equality which draws no distinction between wicked and good men, inviolably adhered to the equality that rewards and punishes everyone according to his merit. But, in the first place, there has never been a society, regardless of the degree of corruption societies may have reached, in which no distinction whatsoever was drawn between wicked and good men; and in matters of morals where it cannot prescribe a sufficiently precise standard to serve as a rule for the Magistrate, the Law, in order not to leave the Citizens' fate or rank to his discretion, very wisely forbids him to pass judgment on persons, and restricts him to judgments on Actions. Only morals as pure as those of the Ancient Romans can tolerate Censors, and such tribunals would soon have overturned everything among us: It is up to public esteem [*223*] to draw the distinction between wicked and good men; the Magistrate is judge only of rigorous right; but the people is the genuine judge of morals; a judge of integrity and even enlightenment on this point, sometimes deceived, but never corrupted. The ranks of the Citizens ought, therefore, to be regulated not according to their personal merit, which would be to leave to the Magistrate the means of applying the Law in an almost arbitrary fashion, but according to the real services they render to the State, which admit of more exact assessment.

LETTER
by
J. J. ROUSSEAU
to
M. PHILOPOLIS

[1] You wish me to reply, Sir, since you ask me questions. Besides, at issue is a work dedicated to my Fellow-Citizens; in defending it I justify the honor they did me in accepting it. I leave aside the good and the bad things about me in your Letter, because they more or less even out, they interest me little and the public less, and none of it has any bearing on the quest for truth. I therefore begin with the argument you regard as crucial to the question I tried to solve.

[2] *The state of society, you tell me, results immediately from man's faculties, and hence from his nature. To wish man not to become sociable would, therefore, be to wish that he not be man, and to criticize society is to attack God's work.* Allow me, Sir, in turn to submit a difficulty to you, before solving yours. I would spare you this detour if I knew a better way of reaching the goal.

[3] Let us assume that some day scientists discovered both the secret of hastening old age and the art of getting men to use this unusual discovery. It might not prove as difficult to persuade them to do so as may at first appear. For reason, that great conveyor of all our foolishness, would not fail us with this one. The Philosophers, above all, and all sensible men, in order to shake the yoke of the passions and enjoy that [*231*] prized repose of soul, would hasten to attain the age of Nestor, and willingly give up the desires that can be satisfied in order to escape those that have to be stifled. Only a few dolts, while blushing at their weakness, would foolishly wish to remain young and happy instead of growing old for the sake of being wise.

[4] Let us assume that it thereupon occurred to a singular, bizarre spirit, in a word to a man of paradoxes, to reproach the others for the absurdity of their maxims, to prove to them that in their quest for tranquility they are rushing to their death, that for all their reasonableness they only talk nonsense, and that if they have to be

old some day, they should at least try to be so as late as possible.

[5] There is no need to ask whether our sophists, afraid to see their Mystification exposed, would not rush to interrupt this troublesome speaker: "Wise seniors," they would say to their followers, "thank Heaven for the graces it bestows on you, and forever rejoice at having heeded its will so well. True, you are decrepit, listless, rheumy; such is man's inexorable fate; but your mind is sound; all your limbs are paralyzed, but you speak like oracles, and if your aches daily increase, your Philosophy increases with them. Be sorry for the impetuous youths whose brute health deprives them of the advantages associated with your weakness. Happy infirmities that gather around you so many skilled Pharmacists supplied with more drugs than you have complaints, so many learned Physicians who are thoroughly familiar with your pulse, who know the names of all your rheumatisms in Greek, so many eager sympathizers and loyal heirs who lead you pleasantly to your final hour. How much help you would have foregone if you had not known how to inflict on yourselves the ills [*maux*] that made them necessary."

[6] Can we not easily imagine them then apostrophizing our heedless alarm-sounder, and addressing him approximately as follows:

[7] "Rash haranguer, stop these impious discourses. Dare you thus blame the will of him [*232*] who made humankind? Is not old age a state that follows from man's constitution? Is it not natural for man to grow old? What, then, are you doing with your seditious discourses, if not attacking a Law of nature and hence the will of its Creator? Since man grows old, God wants him to grow old. Are facts anything other than the expression of his will? Recognize that man young is not man as God wanted to make him, and that in order to obey his orders promptly one must hasten to grow old."

[8] Assuming all this, I ask you, Sir, whether the man of paradoxes should remain silent or reply and, if he should reply, kindly to let me know what he should say, and I will then try to meet your objection.

[9] Since you mean to attack me in terms of my own system, please do not forget that in my view society is as natural to mankind as decrepitude is to the individual, and that Peoples need arts, Laws and Governments, as old men need crutches. The only difference

is that old age is a state that follows from the nature of humankind not, as you maintain, immediately, but only, as I have proved, with the help of external circumstances which might have been or not been, or might at least have occurred sooner or later, and hence speeded up or slowed down the progress. As a number of these circumstances even depend on men's will, I was compelled to assume, for the sake of strict symmetry, that the individual has the power to speed up his old age just as the species has the power to delay its old age. Since the state of society thus has an ultimate limit which men have it in their power to reach either sooner or later, it is not useless to show them the danger of going so fast, and the miseries of a condition which they take to be the perfection of the species.

[10] To the list of the evils which beset men, and which I hold to be of their own making, you rejoin, Leibniz and yourself, that all is good, and that providence is thus justified. I was far from believing that it needed the help of the Leibnizian, or, indeed, of any other Philosophy for its justification. Do you yourself seriously think that any System [*233*] of Philosophy whatsoever could be more blameless than the Universe, and that a Philosopher's arguments exonerate providence more convincingly than do God's works? Besides, to deny the existence of evil is a most convenient way of excusing the author of that evil; the stoics formerly made themselves a laughingstock for less.

[11] According to Leibniz and to Pope, whatever is, is right [*or*: good]. If there are societies, it is because the general good requires that there be societies; if there are none, the general good requires that there be none, and if someone persuaded men to return to live in the forests, it would be good that they return to live there. One must not bring to bear on the nature of things an idea of good or evil drawn solely from the relations between them, for things may be good relative to the whole, though evil in themselves. What contributes to the general good may be a particular evil which it is permissible to get rid of if possible. For if this evil, when tolerated, is useful to the whole, the opposite good which one attempts to substitute for it will, once it takes effect, be no less useful to it. If all is good as it is, then, by parity of reason, if someone tries to alter the state of things, it is good that he try to alter it; and whether it be good or bad that he succeed can be learned only from the

outcome, and not from reason. None of this prevents a particular evil from being a real evil for the person who suffers it. It was good for the whole that we be civilized since that is what we are, but it would certainly have been better for us if we were not so. Leibniz could never have derived anything from his system to refute this proposition; and it is evident that optimism rightly understood neither supports nor subverts my position.

[12] I therefore need answer neither Leibniz nor Pope, but only yourself, who, without drawing any distinction between universal evil, which they deny, and particular evil, which they do not deny, claim that simply because a thing exists it is not permissible to wish that it exist differently. But, Sir, if all is good as it is, then all was good as it was before there were Governments and Laws; hence it was at least superfluous to establish them, and in that case Jean-Jacques would have had an easy time of it against Philopolis with your system. If all is good as it is in the [234] way in which you understand it, what is the point of redressing our vices, curing our evils, correcting our errors? Of what use are our Pulpits, our Courts, our Academies? Why call the Doctor when you have a fever? How do you know whether the good of the greater whole, which you do not know, does not require you to be delirious, and whether the health of the inhabitants of Saturn or of Sirius would not suffer because yours was restored? Let everything go as it may, so that everything always go well. If everything is as best it can be, then you must condemn any action whatsoever. For since any action, as soon as it occurs, necessarily brings about some change in the state things are in, one cannot touch anything without doing wrong, and the most absolute quietism is the only virtue left to man. Finally, if all is good as it is, then it is good that there be Laplanders, Eskimos, Algonquins, Chickasaws, Caribs, who do without our political order, Hottentots who have no use for it, and a Genevan who approves of them. Leibniz himself would grant this.

[13] Man, you say, is such as the place he was to occupy in the universe required. But men differ so much according to times and places that with this kind of logic, inferences from the particular to the Universal are liable to lead to rather contradictory and inconclusive conclusions. A single error in Geography is enough to overturn the whole of this supposed doctrine which deduces what ought to be from what one sees. An Indian will say that as it is the way of Beavers to hole up in dens, man ought to sleep in the open, in

a Hammock stretched between trees. No, no, the Tartar will say, man is made to sleep in a Wagon. Poor people, our Philopolises will exclaim with an air of pity, don't you see that man is made to build cities! When it comes to thinking about human nature, the true Philosopher is neither an Indian nor a Tartar, neither from Geneva nor from Paris, but is a man.

[14] I believe that the monkey is a Beast, and I have stated my reason for believing it; you are good enough to inform me that the Orang-Outang also is one, but I must admit that given the facts I cited, this one seemed to me difficult to prove. You philosophize too well to pass judgment on this as lightly as do our travelers [*235*] who are sometimes ready without much ado to rank their own kind among the beasts. You would, therefore, certainly place the public in your debt, and instruct even naturalists, if you told us by what means you settled this question.

[15] In my Epistle Dedicatory I congratulated my Fatherland for having one of the best governments that can be: In the body of the Discourse I showed that there could be very few good Governments: I do not see the contradiction you find in this. But how do you know, Sir, that if my health permitted I would go and live in the woods rather than among my Fellow-Citizens for whom you know my affection? So far was I from saying anything of the sort in my work, that you must, rather, have found in it very powerful reasons for not choosing that kind of life. I am much too sensible in my own person of how difficult it is for me not to live with men as corrupt as myself, and even the wise man, if there is one, will not nowadays seek happiness in a desert. If one can, one ought to settle in one's Fatherland in order to love and to serve it. Happy he who, failing that opportunity, can at least live in friendship in the common Fatherland of Mankind, in this vast sanctuary open to all men, where austere wisdom and exuberant youth are equally at ease; where humanity, hospitality, gentleness and all the charms of an easy society reign; where the Poor man still finds Friends, virtue finds examples that energize it, and reason finds guides that enlighten it. One can profitably watch the spectacle of life on that great Stage of fortune, vice and, sometimes, virtues; but one should end one's life in peace in one's own country.

[16] It seems to me, Sir, that you censure me most severely for a remark which appears to me to be perfectly correct but which, regardless of whether it is correct or not, has not in my text the meaning you are pleased to attribute to it by the addition of a single

Letter. *If it [nature] destined us to be saints then*, you have me say, *I almost dare assert, the state of reflection is a state against Nature, and the man who meditates is a depraved animal.* I confess to you that if I had confounded health and saintliness in this fashion, and if the proposition were true, I would think myself very likely to become a great saint [236] in the next world or at least always to be in good health in this one.

[17] I conclude, Sir, by answering your last three questions. I shall not avail myself of the time you allow me to think about them; I had taken care to do so beforehand.

[18] *Would a man or any other sentient Being that had never known pain experience pity and be moved at the sight of a child being murdered?* I answer no.

[19] *Why does the Populace, to which M. Rousseau attributes such a large dose of pity, so avidly glut itself with the spectacle of a wretch dying on the wheel?* For the same reason you go to the Theater to weep and to see Seide murder his Father, or Thyestes drink his son's blood. Pity is such a delicious sentiment that it is not surprising one seeks to experience it. Besides, everyone is secretly curious to learn the movements of Nature as the fearful moment which none can escape draws near. Add to this the pleasure of being, for two months, the neighborhood orator and movingly describing to one's neighbors the fine death of the man most recently broken on the wheel.

[20] *Is the affection which the females of animals display for their young directed toward these young, or toward the mother?* First toward the mother because of her need, thereafter toward the young out of habit. I had said so in the Discourse. *If perchance it were toward her, the well-being of the young would be all the more securely guaranteed.* I should think so too. However, this maxim demands not a broad but a narrow construction, for as soon as the Chicks have hatched, the Hen seems to have no need of them, and yet she yields to none in maternal solicitude.

[21] These, Sir, are my answers. Note, moreover, that in this matter just as in that of the first discourse, I am always the monster who maintains that man is naturally good, and my adversaries are always the honest folk who, for the sake of public edification, try to prove that nature made only scoundrels.

[22] I am, as much as one can be of someone one does not know, Sir, etc.

Comments on the Discourse on Inequality by Charles-Georges Le Roy together with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Replies

ad Note IV, p. 192: It is true that the earth abandoned to itself is very fertile; but what conclusion is one to draw from this? It is no less certain that man if he were frugivorous and nomadic would die of hunger five or six months out of the year. Mealy fruit, such as acorns, chestnuts, etc. keep the longest; but by April they are all rotten or have begun to germinate, unless they were stored very carefully. In which case one would have to assume storage and a settled dwelling. The only exclusively frugivorous animals are those that can forage and feed off buds and bark. Boars, that ordinarily live off roots, acorns, etc. are compelled in Spring to devour young animals, rabbits, etc. It has to be conceded that in many respects we resemble boars.

Reply: I do not know about this resemblance, nor do I know why, if there were no fruit, man would not eat grass or shoots, and use his hands or claws to dig for roots as even any number of our [civilized] men have frequently done in desert places where they have lived off roots for very long periods of time. In addition, people are forever telling me about long winters, without being prepared to take into account that more than half the earth hardly bas any winter at all, the trees do not lose their foliage, and there is fruit all year long. The arguments against me are always drawn from a Paris, or a London, or some other small corner of the world, [while] I try to draw mine only from the world itself.

ad Note VIII, p. 196: Hares, rabbits, and many other frugivorous animals have litters of up to seven or eight, and the carnivores that eat them, like weasels etc., have no more. Among birds, partridges have much larger ones than hawks. The nighthawk which lives exclusively off flies and eats no seed has only two young, like the turtle dove.

It is not true that frugivores need more time to find food than do carnivores. The wild animals that graze set out (for the most

part) every evening at the same time, and return before day-break. Carnivores spend as much time searching, but the hunt is variable. Sometimes it is a matter of an instant; more often of the entire night. One can easily tell the whole road a wolf had to travel. It even happens that day overtakes him with his stomach still empty. It is in such cases that she-wolves attack children. It is therefore not the ease of living that determines the number of young. One always assumes that everything is well regulated [*réglé*] in nature. Make sure of your facts, and you will perhaps see that everything is not well regulated [*réglé*].

Reply: The difficulty carnivores have in finding their prey wherever men have cleared and cultivated the land might not arise if the whole earth had been left fallow; certain it is, that you can place a cat or a wolf in a position where it would take it no more than twenty minutes out of every twenty-four hours to get its food; whereas on any assumption you care to make, a horse or an ox will always need to spend several hours grazing so that, by and large, they will always be at a disadvantage. Besides, regardless of what observation may establish about particular facts, the proof that everything is well regulated [*réglé*] is drawn from a general and incontrovertible fact, namely that all species endure: but I do understand that we, and especially I, can often err in the choice and application of the rules [*règles*].

ad Note XII, p. 212: The fact cited by Mr. Locke is true, and it cannot be denied him. The society between the male and the female wolf remains very constant until the young no longer need help. The family does not even, naturally, separate until the [young have reached the] time for mating. As for deer, they mingle indifferently, and the only choice the doe makes is that of the youngest while the old ones fight. It is the case that, in spite of their reputation, she-wolves are rather faithful; whereas does are the biggest whores on earth, which might lead one to believe that we indeed are frugivorous. Among birds, birds of prey, and specifically ravens, have a society that lasts through the entire upbringing of the family, and I have seen a wild turtle-dove make two males happy one after the other on the same tree. Regarding the duration of society there is a great deal of variation in the other species [as well]. The two grey partridges stay with their family until [they have reached] the time for mating. The male red partridge abandons his female the

moment she begins to hatch. Yet their food is the same. It would not seem that all these details about ways [of life: *moeurs*] bear any relation to the way of feeding.

[*OC* IV, *1059*]

Letter from J.J. Rousseau to M. de Voltaire

18 August 1756

[1] Your latest Poems, Sir, reached me in my solitude, and although all my friends know of my love for your writings, I do not know at whose instance these might have come to me, if not yours. I found both of them enjoyable and instructive, and recognized the master's hand; and I believe that I owe you thanks for the copy as well as for the work. I cannot say that every part appears to me equally good; but the things in it that I find displeasing only make me feel all the more confident about the ones that transport me. It is not without effort that I sometimes arm my reason against the charms of your Poetry; but it is in order to render my admiration more worthy of your works that I try not to admire them indiscriminately.

[2] I shall do more, Sir; I shall forthrightly tell you not about the beauties I believed I felt in these two poems, which task would daunt my laziness, nor even about the flaws which people cleverer than I may perhaps find in them, but about the displeasures which right now perturb the liking I took for your lessons, and I shall tell you about them while still moved by a first reading in which my heart avidly listened to yours, loving you as my brother, honoring you as my Master, and flattering myself that you will recognize in my intentions the candor of an upright soul, and in what I say the tone of a friend of the truth speaking to a Philosopher. Besides, the more your second poem enchants me, the more freely do I side against the first; for if you did not hesitate to be at odds with yourself, why should I hesitate to share your opinion? I can only believe [*1060*] that you are not strongly attached to sentiments which you refute so well.

[3] All my objections are, then, directed at your poem about the Lisbon disaster, because I expected from it effects worthier of the humanity that seems to have inspired it. You charge Pope and Leibniz with insulting our evils by maintaining that all is well [*or*: good],

and you so greatly magnify the picture of our miseries that you heighten our sense of them; instead of the solace I had hoped for, you only distress me. It is as if you feared that I might not see clearly enough how unhappy I am; and believed that you would greatly calm me by proving that all is bad.

[4] Make no mistake about it, Sir; the effect is the very opposite of what you intend. This optimism which you find so cruel yet consoles me amid the very pains which you depict as unbearable.

[5] Pope's poem allays my evils and inclines me to patience, yours embitters my suffering, incites me to grumble, and, by depriving me of everything but a shaken hope, reduces me to despair. In this odd discord between what you prove and what I experience, do calm the perplexity that troubles me, and tell me which of the two is deceiving itself, sentiment or reason. Pope and Leibniz tell me, "Man, have patience. Your evils are a necessary effect of your nature and of the constitution of this universe. The eternal and beneficent Being who governs you would have wished to safeguard you from them. Among all possible economies he chose the one that combined the least evil with the most good, or (to say the same thing even more bluntly, if need be), if he did not do better, it is that he could not do better."

[6] Now what does your poem tell me? "Suffer forever, unhappy man. If there is a God who has created you, no doubt he is omnipotent; he could have prevented all your evils: hence do not hope that they will ever end; for there is no understanding why you exist, if not to suffer and to die." I do not know what might be more consoling about such a doctrine than about optimism and even about fatalism. For my own part, I admit that it seems to me even more cruel than Manicheanism. If the puzzle [*1061*] of the origin of evil forced you to diminish one of God's perfections, why would you want to justify his power at the expense of his goodness? If one has to choose between two errors, I prefer the first.

[7] You do not wish, Sir, to have your work looked upon as a work against Providence; and I shall certainly refrain from calling it that, although you taxed a book in which I pleaded the case of mankind against itself with being a writing against mankind. I know the distinction that has to be made between an author's intentions and the consequences that can be drawn from his doctrine. However, my just self-defense obliges me to point out to you that my

aim, in depicting human miseries, was excusable and, I believe, even praiseworthy; for I showed men how they bring their miseries upon themselves, and hence how they might avoid them.

[8] I do not see that one can seek the source of moral evil anywhere but in man, free, perfected, hence corrupted; and as for physical evils, if, as it seems to me, it is a contradiction for matter to be both sentient and insentient, they are inevitable in any system of which man is a part; and the question, then, is not why is man not perfectly happy, but why does he exist. Moreover, I believe I have shown that except for death, which is an evil almost solely because of the preparations made in anticipation of it, most of our physical evils are also of our own making. To continue with your subject of Lisbon, you must admit, for example, that nature had not assembled two thousand six- or seven-story houses there, and that if the inhabitants of that great city had been more evenly dispersed and more simply lodged, the damage would have been far less, and perhaps nil. All would have fled at the first shock, and the following day they would have been seen twenty miles away, just as cheerful as if nothing had happened; but they were set on staying, on stubbornly standing by hovels, on risking further shocks, because what they would have left behind was worth more than what they could take with them. How many unfortunates perished in this disaster for wanting to take, one his clothes, another his papers, a third his money? Does not everyone know that a man's person has become his least part, and that it is [*1062*] almost not worth the trouble to save when he has lost everything else?

[9] You would have wished (as who would not have wished the same?) that the quake had happened in the depths of a wilderness rather than in Lisbon. Can there be any doubt that there also are quakes in wildernesses? But we do not talk about them, because they do no harm [*mal*] to City Gentlemen, the only men of whom we take any notice: indeed, they hardly do any even to the animals and the Savages living scattered in remote places, unafraid of roofs collapsing or houses burning down. But what would enjoying such a privilege mean? Would it then follow that the order of the world has to change according to our whims, that nature has to be subjugated to our laws, and that all we need do in order to forbid it an earthquake in a given place is to build a City there?

[10] There are events that often strike us more or less depending on the angle from which we view them, and that lose much of the horror they inspire at first sight once we take the trouble to examine them more closely. I learned in *Zadig*, and nature daily confirms it, that a quick death is not always a real evil, and may sometimes pass for a relative good. Of the many people crushed under the rubble of Lisbon, some, no doubt, escaped greater misfortunes: and notwithstanding how touching such a description may be, and how much matter it provides for poetry, it is not certain that a single one of these unfortunates suffered more than if, in the ordinary course of things, he spent a long time anxiously waiting for the death that took him by surprise. Is there a sadder end than that of a dying man overwhelmed by useless attentions, whom his lawyer and his heirs will not let breathe, whom Doctors kill in his bed at their leisure, and whom barbarous Priests artfully make savour death? As for me, I see everywhere that the evils to which nature subjects us are much less cruel than those which we add to them.

[11] But however ingenious we may be in exacerbating our miseries by dint of ever fancier institutions, we have as yet not been able to perfect ourselves to the point of generally making life a burden to ourselves and preferring nothingness to our existence; otherwise discouragement and despair would soon have taken hold of *[1063]* most people, and mankind could not have long endured. Now, if it is better for us to be than not to be, this would be enough to justify our existence, even if we should have no compensation to expect for the evils we have to suffer, and even if these evils were as great as you depict them. But on this subject it is difficult to find good faith among men, and good computations among Philosophers; because in comparing goods and evils, the latter always forget the sweet sentiment of existence, independent of any other sensation, and the vanity of scorning death prompts the former to malign life; rather like women who, given a stained dress and scissors, pretend to prefer holes to stains.

[12] You think with Erasmus that few people would wish to be reborn in the same conditions in which they lived; but some peg their wares very high who would reduce them considerably if they saw any prospect of making a sale. Besides, Sir, whom would you have me believe you consulted about this? Rich people, perhaps,

sated with false pleasures but ignorant of the genuine ones, forever bored with life and forever afraid to lose it; perhaps men of letters, the most sedentary of all orders of men, the most unhealthy, the most reflective, and consequently the most unhappy. Would you like to find men who are easier to deal with, or at least usually more sincere, and whose voice should be given preference if only because they are the more numerous? Consult an honest burgher who has led an obscure and tranquil life, without projects and without ambition; a good artisan who lives comfortably off his trade; even a peasant, not from France, where they maintain that peasants must be made to die of poverty in order to make us live, but from the country where you are, for example, and in general from any free country. I dare set it down as a fact that in the upper Valais there is possibly not a single Mountaineer who is dissatisfied with his almost automaton life, and who would not willingly trade even Paradise itself for being endlessly reborn to vegetate thus perpetually. These differences lead me to believe that it is often our abuse of life that makes it burdensome to us; and I have a far less favorable opinion of those [*1064*] who regret having lived, than of him who can say with Cato: "I do not regret having lived, inasmuch as I have lived in a way that allows me to think I was not born in vain." This is not to say that the wise man may not sometimes move on voluntarily without grumbling and despair, when nature or fortune distinctly conveys to him the order to depart. But in the ordinary course of things, human life is not, all in all, a bad gift, whatever may be the evils with which it is strewn; and while it is not always an evil to die, it is very seldom one to live.

[13] Our different ways of thinking about all these topics show me why I find a number of your proofs rather inconclusive. For I am not unaware of how much more easily human reason assumes the cast of our opinions than of truth, and of how, between two men of opposite opinions, what one believes demonstrated, the other often regards as nothing but sophistry. For example, when you attack the chain of beings so well described by Pope, you say that it is not true that the world could not subsist if one removed a single atom from it. In support of this you cite M. de Crouzas; then you add that nature is subject to no precise measure or precise form; that no planet moves in an absolutely regular orbit; that no known being has a strictly mathematical figure; that no precise

quantity is required for any operation whatsoever; that nature never acts rigorously; that there is therefore no reason to assert that one atom less on earth would be the cause of the earth's destruction. I admit to you that regarding all this, Sir, I am more struck by the force of the assertion than of the reasoning, and that on this occasion I would sooner yield to your authority than to your proofs.

[14] As regards M. de Crouzas, I have not read his writing against Pope, and am perhaps not capable of understanding it; but this much is perfectly certain, that I shall not concede to him what I shall have denied you, and that I trust his authority as little as I do his proofs. Far from thinking that nature is not subject to precision with regard to quantities and figures, I am inclined to believe that, on the contrary, only nature rigorously conforms to this precision, be[*1065*]cause only nature is capable of exactly adapting means to ends, and matching force to resistance. As for these supposed irregularities, can there be any doubt that they all have their physical cause, and is the failure to perceive it [reason] enough to deny that it exists? These apparent irregularities are without a doubt due to laws which we do not know and which nature follows just as faithfully as it does those we do know; to some agent we do not perceive, and whose interference or assistance in all of its operations has fixed measures: otherwise we would have to say explicitly that there are actions without a principle and effects without a cause; which is at odds with all philosophy.

[15] Let us assume two weights in equilibrium, and yet unequal; add to the smaller the quantity by which they differ; either the two weights will still remain in equilibrium, in which case there is a cause without an effect; or the equilibrium will be broken, in which case there is an effect without a cause. But if the weights were made of iron, and a tiny magnet were concealed underneath one of them, then the precision of nature would deprive this equilibrium of the appearance of precision, and the more exact it was, the more it would appear to lack exactness. There is not a single figure, not a single operation, not a single law in the physical world regarding which one could not give some example similar to the one I have just suggested about weight.

[16] You say that no known being has a strictly mathematical figure; I ask you, Sir, whether there is a possible figure that is not strictly mathematical, whether the most bizarre curve is not as

regular in the eyes of nature as a perfect circle is in ours. I imagine, further, that if any body could possess this apparent regularity, it would only be the universe itself, assuming it to be a plenum and finite; for mathematical figures, being nothing but abstractions, have a relation only to themselves; whereas all the figures of natural bodies are relative to other bodies and to movements that modify them; so that this would still not prove anything against the precision of nature, even if we agreed on how you understand the word *precision*.

[17] You draw a distinction between events that have effects, and those that do not. I doubt the distinction is sound. Every event seems to me necessarily to have some effect, moral or physical, or a combination [*1066*] of the two, but which is not always perceived because the filiation of events is even more difficult to follow than that of men; in general, since one should not look for effects more considerable than the events that produce them, the minuteness of causes frequently makes inquiry ridiculous, although the effects are certain, just as several almost imperceptible effects frequently combine to produce a considerable event. Add to this that a given effect does not fail to occur even though it does so outside the body that produces it. Thus the dust a carriage raises may do nothing to the motion of the vehicle and yet influence that of the world; but since there is nothing foreign to the universe, everything that happens in it necessarily acts on the universe itself. Thus, Sir, your examples seem to me more ingenious than convincing; I see a thousand different reasons why it may perhaps not have been a matter of indifference to Europe that on a certain day the heiress of Burgundy had her hair dressed well or badly; nor to the destiny of Rome that Caesar turned his gaze to the right or to the left and spat to one side rather than the other on his way to the Senate the day he met his punishment there. In a word, recalling the grain of sand mentioned by Pascal, I am in some respects of your Brahman's opinion, and regardless of how one views things, it seems to me indisputable that while all events may not have sensible effects, they all have real effects, of which the human mind easily loses the thread, but which nature never confuses.

[18] You say that it is demonstrated that the heavenly bodies make their revolutions in non-resisting space. That was certainly a fine thing to demonstrate; but in the manner of the ignorant I place

very little faith in demonstrations that are beyond me. I should imagine that in order to construct this one, one would have reasoned more or less as follows:

[19] A given force acting in accordance with a given law must impart to the Stars a given motion in a non-resisting medium; now, the Stars exhibit exactly the motion calculated, hence there is no resistance. But who can tell whether there may not be a million other possible laws, not counting the genuine one, in terms of which the same motions could be explained even better in a fluid [medium] than in a vacuum by this law? Did not abhorrence of a vacuum long explain most of the effects [*1067*] that have since been attributed to the action of air? After other experiments subsequently refuted the abhorrence of a vacuum, did not everything turn out to be a plenum? Was not the vacuum restored on the basis of new calculations? Who can assure us that a still more exact system will not refute it again? Let us leave aside the innumerable difficulties a Physicist might raise about the nature of light and of lighted spaces; but do you in good faith believe that Bayle, for whose wisdom and restraint in matters of opinion I share your admiration, would have found your opinion all that well demonstrated? In general it seems to me that Skeptics forget themselves a little whenever they assume a dogmatic tone, and that they should use the term *to demonstrate* more soberly than anyone else. How likely is one to be believed if one boasts of knowing nothing while asserting so many things?

[20] However, you have made a correction in Pope's system that is very much to the point, by observing that there is no proportional gradation between the creatures and the Creator, and that, if the chain of created beings leads to God, it does so because he holds it, and not because he ends it.

[21] Regarding the good of the whole, preferable to that of its part, you have man say: "I must be as dear to my master, I, a thinking and a sentient being, as the planets, which are probably not sentient." No doubt this material universe must not be dearer to its Author than a single thinking and sentient being. But the system of this universe which produces, preserves, and perpetuates all thinking and sentient beings must be dearer to him than a single one of these beings; hence in spite of his goodness, or rather because of it, he may sacrifice something of the happiness of individuals to the preservation of the whole. I believe, I hope that I am worth

more in the eyes of God than the soil of a planet; but if the planets are inhabited, as is likely, why would I be worth more in his eyes than all the inhabitants of Saturn? Although one may ridicule these ideas, it is certain that all analogies favor Saturn's being populated, and that nothing but human pride opposes it. Now, once this population is assumed, it would seem that, even for God himself, preserving the universe is a moral issue, which is multiplied by the number of inhabited worlds.

[22] That a man's corpse feeds worms, wolves, or plants is not, I admit, a com[*1068*]pensation for that man's death; but if, in the system of the universe, it is necessary to the preservation of mankind that there be a cycle of substance between man, animals and vegetation, then one individual's particular evil contributes to the general good. I die, I am eaten by worms; but my children, my brothers will live as I have lived, and by the order of nature, I do for all men what Codrus, Curtius, the Decii, the Philaeni, and a thousand others did voluntarily for a small number of men.

[23] To come back, Sir, to the system you attack, I believe that one cannot examine it properly without carefully distinguishing between particular evil, whose existence no philosopher has ever denied, and general evil, which the optimist denies. The question is not whether each one of us suffers or not; but whether it was good that the universe be, and whether our evils were inevitable in the constitution of the universe. Thus the addition of one article, it seems, would make the proposition more exact; and instead of saying *All is well* [or: *good*], it might be preferable to say *The whole is good* or *All is good for the whole.* Then it is quite obvious that no human being could give direct proofs *pro* or *con*; for these proofs depend on a perfect knowledge of the world's constitution and of its Author's purpose, and this knowledge is indisputably beyond human intelligence. The true principles of optimism can be drawn neither from the properties of matter, nor from the mechanics of the universe, but only by inference from the perfections of God, who presides over all; so that one does not prove the existence of God by Pope's system, but Pope's system by the existence of God, and the question regarding the origin of evil is, without a doubt, derived from the question regarding Providence. If both of these questions have been dealt with equally unsatisfactorily, it is because Providence has always been reasoned about so poorly that the

absurd things that have been said about it have greatly muddled all the corollaries that could be drawn from this great and consoling dogma.

[24] The first to have spoiled the cause of God are the Priests and the Devout, who do not tolerate anything's happening according to the established order, but always have Divine justice intervene in purely natural events, [*1069*] and who, in order to make sure of being right, punish and chastise the wicked, [and say] the good are being either tested or rewarded, depending on whether they end up with goods or evils. I do not, myself, know whether this is good Theology; but I find it bad reasoning to base the proofs of Providence on both the *pro* and the *con*, and indiscriminately attribute to it everything that would equally happen without it.

[25] The Philosophers, for their part, seem to me scarcely more reasonable, when I see them reprove Heaven because they are not insentient, cry out that all is lost when they have a toothache, or are poor, or get robbed, and hold God responsible, as Seneca says, for looking after their luggage. If some tragic accident had caused Cartouche or Caesar to die in childhood, people would have said: what crimes did they commit? These two brigands lived, and we say: why were they allowed to live? By contrast, a devout person will say in the first case: God wanted to punish the father by taking his child; and in the second: God preserved the child to punish the people. Thus, regardless of the side which nature chose, Providence is always right among the devout, and always wrong among the Philosophers. Perhaps in the order of human things, it is neither wrong nor right, because everything depends on the common law, and there is no exception for anyone. It would seem that in the eyes of the Lord of the universe particular events here below are nothing, that his Providence is exclusively universal, that he leaves it at preserving the genera and species, and at presiding over the whole, without worrying about how each individual spends this short life. Need a wise King who wants everyone to live happily in his States inquire whether their inns are good? If they are bad, the passerby grumbles one night and laughs the rest of his days at such an inappropriate irritation. *Nature wanted us to be passers-by on earth, not residents.*

[26] In order to think correctly about this, it seems that things should be considered relatively in the physical order, and absolutely

in the moral order: so that the greatest idea of Providence I can conceive is that each material being be arranged in the best way possible in relation to the whole, and each [*1070*] intelligent and sentient being in the best way possible in relation to itself; which means, in other words, that for a being that senses its existence, existing is preferable to not existing. But this rule has to be applied *to each sentient being's total duration, and not to some particular* instants of its duration, such as human life; which shows how closely related the question of Providence is to that of the immortality of the soul, which happily I believe, although I am not unaware that reason can doubt it, and to the question of eternal punishments, which neither you nor I, nor any man who thinks well of God, will ever believe.

[27] If I trace these various questions to their common principle, it seems to me that they all relate to the question of the existence of God. If God exists, he is perfect; if he *is* perfect, he is wise, powerful and just; if he is wise and powerful, all is well; if he is just and powerful, my soul is immortal; if my soul is immortal, thirty years of life are nothing to me, and they are perhaps necessary to the preservation of the universe. If I am granted the first proposition, the ones that follow will never be shaken; if it is denied, there is no use arguing about its consequences.

[28] We are, neither of us, in this latter situation. At least I am so far from being able to presume anything of the kind of you from reading the collection of your works, that most of them offer me the grandest, gentlest, most consoling idea of the Divinity; and I much prefer a Christian after your fashion than after that of the Sorbonne.

[29] As for myself, I naïvely admit to you that on this point neither the *pro* nor the *con* seems to me demonstrated by the lights of reason, and that while the Theist founds his sentiment on no more than probabilities, the Atheist, less precise still, seems to me to found his sentiment on no more than some contrary possibilities. What is more, the objections, on either side, are always irrefutable, because they turn on things about which man has no genuine idea. I grant *all this*, and yet I believe in God just as strongly as I believe any other truth, because to believe and not to believe are the things that least depend on me, because the state of doubt is too violent a state for my soul, because when my reason wavers, my faith

cannot long remain [*1071*] in suspense, and decides without it; and finally because a thousand things I like better draw me toward the more consoling side and add the weight of hope to the equilibrium of reason.

[30] ⟨I remember that what struck me most forcibly in my entire life, about the fortuitous arrangement of the universe, is the twenty-first philosophical thought, in which it is shown by the laws of probability that when the number of throws is infinite, the unlikelihood of an outcome is more than made up for by the frequency of the throws, and that consequently the mind should be more astonished by the hypothetical duration of chaos than by the actual birth of the universe. – On the assumption that motion is necessary, this is, to my mind, the most forceful thing ever said in this quarrel; and, as for myself, I declare that I know of no reply to it, true or false, that is consonant with common sense, lest it be to deny as false what one cannot know, that motion is essential to matter. On the other hand, to my knowledge no one has ever explained the generation of organized bodies and the perpetuity of seeds in terms of materialism; but there is this difference between these two opposed positions, that although both seem to me equally convincing, only the latter persuades me. As for the former, if someone were to tell me that, with one fortuitous throw of characters, the *Henriade* was composed, I would unhesitatingly deny it; it is more possible for chance to bring this about than for my mind to believe it, and I sense that there is a point at which moral impossibilities are for me equivalent to a physical certainty. Never mind what I may be told about the eternity of time, I have not traversed it; about the infinity of throws, I have not counted them; and my disbelief, however unphilosophical, will, in this, triumph over demonstration itself. I do not object to having what in this connection I call *proof of sentiment* called *prejudice*; and I do not offer this obstinacy of belief as a model; but, with what is perhaps unprecedented good faith, I offer it as an invincible disposition of my soul, which nothing will ever succeed in overcoming, of which I have so far had no occasion to complain, and which cannot be attacked without cruelty.⟩

[31] Here, then, is a truth which both of us take as our point of departure, with the help of which you sense how easy optimism [*1072*] is to defend and Providence to justify, and there is no need

to rehearse for your benefit the hackneyed but solid arguments that have so often been made on this subject. As for the Philosophers who do not grant the principle, one should not argue with them about these matters, because what is but a proof of sentiment for us cannot become a demonstration for them, and it is not reasonable to tell a man: You ought to believe this because I believe it. They, for their part, ought not to argue with us about these same matters, which are nothing but corollaries of the principal proposition which an honest adversary hardly dares to urge against them, and because they, in turn, would be wrong to demand to have the corollary proven to them independently of the proposition on which it is based. I think that they ought not to do so for another reason as well. Namely that there is something inhumane about troubling peaceful souls, and distressing men to no purpose, when what one is trying to teach them is neither certain nor useful. I think, in a word, following your example, that one cannot too forcefully attack the superstition that disturbs society, nor too much respect the Religion that upholds it.

[32] But, like you, I am indignant that each individual's faith does not enjoy the most perfect freedom, and that man dares to control the inner recesses of consciences which he cannot possibly enter; as if it depended on ourselves to believe or not to believe in matters where demonstration has no place, and reason could ever be enslaved to authority. Are the Kings of this world then inspectors in the next? and have they the right to torment their Subjects here below, in order to force them to go to Paradise? No; all human Government is by its nature restricted to civil duties; and regardless of what the Sophist Hobbes may have said on the subject, when a man serves the State well, he owes no one an account of how he serves God.

[33] I do not know whether this just Being will not some day punish every tyranny exercised in his name; I am quite sure, at least, that he will have no share in them, and that he will not deny eternal happiness to any nonbeliever who is virtuous and in good faith. Can I doubt, without offending his goodness and even his justice, that an upright heart redeems an involuntary error, and that [*1073*] blameless morals are worth at least as much as a thousand bizarre rites prescribed by men and rejected by reason? I shall say more; if I had the choice of purchasing good works at the price of

my faith, and of making up for my supposed nonbelief by dint of virtue, I would not hesitate for one instant; and I would rather be able to say to God: without thinking of you, I have done the good that is pleasing to you, and my heart conformed to your will without knowing it; than to say to him, as some day I shall have to do: Alas! I loved you and never ceased to offend you; I have known you, and done nothing to please you.

[34] There is, I admit, a kind of profession of faith which the laws may impose; but beyond the principles of morality and of natural right, it ought to be purely negative, because there can exist Religions that attack the foundations of society, and one has to begin by exterminating these Religions in order to insure the peace of the State. Among these dogmas that ought to be proscribed, intolerance is easily the most odious; but it must be checked at its source; for the most bloodthirsty Fanatics change their language as their fortune changes, and when they are not the strongest, they preach nothing but patience and gentleness. Thus I call intolerant on principle any man who imagines that one cannot be a good man without believing everything he believes, and mercilessly damns all those who do not think as he does. Indeed, the faithful are rarely inclined to leave reprobates in peace in this world; and a Saint who believes himself to be living with the damned readily preempts the devil's work. And if there were intolerant nonbelievers who wanted to force the people to believe nothing, I would banish them no less sternly than those who want to force the people to believe whatever they please.

[35] I would wish, then, that in every State there were a moral code, or a kind of civil profession of faith, containing, positively, the social maxims everyone would be bound to acknowledge, and, negatively, the fanatical maxims one would be bound to reject, not as impious, but as seditious. Thus every Religion that could conform to the code would be allowed; every Religion that did not conform to it would be proscribed; and everyone would be free to have no other Religion than the code itself. This work, done with [*1074*] care, would be the most useful book ever composed, it seems to me, and perhaps the only one needful to men. Here, Sir, is a subject for you. I passionately wish you might be willing to undertake this work and to adorn it with your Poetry, so that from childhood on, everyone being able to learn it easily, it might instill in

all hearts those sentiments of gentleness and humanity which shine in your writings, and which the devout have always lacked. I urge you to meditate on this project, which must appeal at least to your soul. In your *Poem on Natural Religion* you gave us the Catechism of man: give us now, in the one I am suggesting to you, the Catechism of the Citizen. It is a matter calling for long meditation, and perhaps to be reserved for the last of your works, in order to consummate with a benefaction to mankind the most brilliant career ever run by a man of letters.

[36] I cannot help, Sir, noting in this connection a rather odd contrast between yourself and myself on the subject of this letter. Replete with glory, and with no illusions about vain grandeurs, you live free in the midst of abundance; assured of immortality, you philosophize serenely about the nature of the soul; and if the body or the heart suffers, you have Tronchin for physician and friend: yet you find only evil on earth. And I, obscure, poor, and racked by an incurable disease, I meditate with pleasure in my retreat, and find that all is well [*or*: good]. Where do these apparent contradictions come from? You yourself have given the explanation: you enjoy; but I hope, and hope embellishes everything.

[37] I have as much trouble letting go of this tiresome letter as you will have finishing it. Forgive me, great man, a zeal that may be indiscreet but that would not unburden itself to you if I esteemed you less. God forbid that I might wish to give offense to the one among my contemporaries whose talents I most honor, and whose writings speak best to my heart; but what is at stake is the cause of Providence from which I expect everything. After having so long derived solace and courage from your lessons, it is hard on me that you now deprive me of all this, to offer me no more than an uncertain and vague hope, [*1075*] rather as a present palliative than as a future reward. No: I have suffered too much in this life not to expect another. All the subtleties of Metaphysics will not make me doubt for one moment the immortality of the soul and a beneficent Providence. I sense it, I want it, I hope for it, I shall defend it to my last breath; and of all disputations I will have engaged in, it will be the only one in which my own interest will not have been forgotten.

I am, Sir, etc.

Essay on the Origin of Languages

in which

Something is said about Melody and Musical Imitation

BY

Jean Jacques Rousseau
Citizen of Geneva

[*OC* v, *375*]

Chapter One
Of the Various Means of Communicating our Thoughts

[1] Speech differentiates man from the other animals: language differentiates one nation from another; where a man is from is known only once he has spoken. Usage and need cause everyone to learn the language of his country; but what makes this be the language of his country and not of another? In order to tell, one has to go back to some cause that depends on locality and antedates even morals: since speech is the first social institution, it owes its form to natural causes alone.

[2] As soon as one man was recognized by another as a sentient, thinking Being, similar to himself, the desire or the need to communicate to him his sentiments and thoughts made him seek the means to do so. These means can only be drawn from the senses, the only instruments by which one man can act upon another. Hence the institution of sensible signs to express thought. The inventors of language did not make this argument, but instinct suggested its conclusion to them.

[3] The two general means we have of acting on someone else's senses are restricted to two, namely movement and the voice. Movement acts immediately through touch or mediately through gesture; since the first reaches no farther than arm's length, it cannot communicate at a distance, but the other extends as far as does the field of vision. Thus only sight and hearing are left as the passive organs of language among men dispersed. [*376*]

[4] Although the language of gesture and that of the voice are equally natural, the first is easier and less dependent on conventions: for more objects strike our eyes than our ears, and shapes exhibit greater variety than do sounds; they are also more expressive and say more in less time. Love, it is said, was the inventor of drawing. It might also have invented speech, though less felicitously; Dissatisfied with speech, love disdains it, it has livelier ways of expressing itself. How many things the girl who took such pleasure in tracing her Lover's shadow was telling him! What sounds could she have used to convey what she conveyed with this movement of the twig?

[5] Our gestures signify nothing but our natural restlessness; they are not the ones about which I wish to speak. Only Europeans gesticulate while speaking: One would think that the force of their speech resided entirely in their arms; to which they further add the force of their lungs, and all to scarcely any avail. After a Frenchman has huffed and puffed and gone through all kinds of bodily contortions to deliver himself of long speeches, a Turk takes his pipe from his mouth for a moment, quietly says two words, and crushes him with a single pithy saying.

[6] Ever since we learned to gesticulate we forgot the art of pantomime, for the same reason that with so many fancy grammars we no longer understand the symbols of the Egyptians. What the ancients said in the liveliest way they expressed not in words but in signs; they did not say it, they showed it.

[7] Consult ancient history; you will find it filled with such ways of addressing arguments to the eyes, and they never fail to produce a more certain effect than all the discourses that might have been put in their place. The object presented before anything is said stimulates the imagination, arouses curiosity, holds the mind in suspense and anticipation of what will be said. I have noticed that Italians and people from Provence, with whom gesture usually precedes speech, manage in this way to get themselves listened to more attentively and even with greater pleasure. But the most energetic speech is that in which the sign has said everything before a single word is spoken. Tarquin, Thrasybulus lopping off the heads of the poppies, Alexander putting his ring to his favorite's mouth, Diogenes walking in front of Zeno, did they not speak more effectively than with words? What circumlocutions would have expressed the same ideas equally well? Darius [*377*] waging war in Scythia receives from the King of the Scythians a frog, a bird, a mouse, and five arrows: the Herald transmits his gift in silence and departs. This terrible harangue was understood, and Darius found nothing more urgent than to get back to his country as best he could. Substitute a letter for these signs, the more it threatens the less it frightens; it is mere bluster at which Darius would simply have laughed.

[8] When the Levite of Ephraim wanted to avenge the death of his wife, he did not write to the Tribes of Israel; he divided her body into twelve pieces which he sent to them. At this ghastly sight

they rushed to arms crying with one voice: *no, never has anything like this happened in Israel, from the day when our fathers left Egypt until this day!* And the Tribe of Benjamin was exterminated.* Nowadays it would have been turned into lawsuits, debates, perhaps even jokes, it would have dragged on, and the most ghastly crime would finally have gone unpunished. King Saul returning from the fields in like fashion dismembered his plow oxen and used a similar sign to rouse Israel to assist the city of Jabesh. The Jews' Prophets and the Greeks' Lawgivers who frequently presented visible objects to the people spoke to them better with these objects than they would have done with long discourses, and the way in which, according to Athenaeus, the orator Hyperides got the courtesan Phryne acquitted without urging a single word in her defense, is yet another instance of a mute eloquence that has at all times proven effective.

[9] Thus one speaks much better to the eyes than to the ears: no one fails to feel the truth of Horace's judgment in this regard. The most eloquent discourses are even seen to be those with the most images embedded in them, and sounds are never more energetic than when they produce the effect of colors.

[10] However when it is a question of moving the heart and inflaming the passions, it is an entirely different matter. The successive impression made by discourse, striking with cumulative impact, succeeds in arousing in you a different emotion than does the presence of the object itself which you take in all at one glance. Suppose a situation of perfectly well-known pain, *[378]* you will not easily be moved to tears at the sight of the afflicted person; but give him the time to tell you everything he feels and you will soon burst out in tears. Only thus do the scenes of tragedy produce their effect.* Pantomime alone unaccompanied by discourse will leave you almost unmoved; Discourse unaccompanied by gesture will wring tears from you. The passions have their gestures, but they also have their accents, and these accents, which cause us to shudder, these accents to which one cannot close one's ear and which

* Only six hundred of its men, and no women or children, were left.

* I have said elsewhere why feigned miseries affect us more than do genuine ones. There are people who sob at tragedies but never in their lives took pity on a single unhappy person. The invention of the theater is marvelously suited to make our amour propre feel proud of all the virtues we do not have.

by way of it penetrate to the very depths of the heart, in spite of ourselves convey to it the [e]motions that wring them [from us], and cause us to feel what we hear. Let us conclude that visible signs make for more accurate imitation, but that interest is more effectively aroused by sounds.

[11] This leads me to think that if we had never had any but physical needs, we might very well never have spoken and [yet] have understood one another perfectly by means of the language of gesture alone. We might have established societies differing but little from what they are now, or which might even have pursued their end better: we might have instituted laws, chosen chiefs, invented arts, established commerce and, in a word, done almost as many things as we are doing with the help of speech. The epistolary language of salaams* relays the secrets of oriental gallantry from one end to the other of the best-guarded Harems without fear of jealous [masters]. The mutes of the Grand Vizier understand one another and they understand everything they are told by means of signs, just as well as it can be told in discourse. M. Pereyre and those who like himself teach mutes not only to speak but to know what they are saying are, after all, forced first to teach them another no less complicated language, by means of which to enable them to understand that one.

[12] Chardin says that in India traders take one another by the hand and by varying their grip in *[379]* ways no one can see transact all their business in public and yet secretly without having exchanged a single word. Assume these traders to be blind, deaf, and mute, they would understand one another no less well; which shows that in order to form a language for ourselves, a single one of the two senses by which we are active would suffice.

[13] It would also seem from these observations that the invention of the art of communicating our ideas is a function not so much of the organs we use in such communication as of a faculty peculiar to man, which causes him to use his organs for this purpose and which, if he lacked them, would cause him to use others to the same end. Let man be as crudely structured as you please: no doubt he will acquire fewer ideas; but provided only that there is some

* Salaams are any number of the most common objects, such as an orange, a ribbon, a piece of coal, etc., the sending of which conveys a meaning known to all lovers in the country where this language has currency.

means of communication between himself and his kind by which one man can act and the other sense, they will succeed in eventually communicating to one another all the ideas they have.

[14] Animals have a structure more than adequate for this kind of communication, yet none of them has ever put it to this use. Here, it seems to me, is a most distinctive difference. Those among them that work and live together, Beavers, ants, bees, have some natural language for communicating with one another, I have no doubt about it. There is even reason to believe that the language of Beavers and that of ants is gestural and speaks only to the eyes. Be that as it may, precisely because these various languages are natural, they are not acquired; the animals that speak them have them at birth, they all have them, and everywhere they have the same one: they do not change languages, nor do they make any progress whatsoever in them. Conventional language belongs to man alone. This is why man makes progress in good as well as in evil, and why animals do not. This single distinction seems to be far-reaching: they say that it can be explained by the difference in organs. I should be curious to see this explanation.

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Chapter Two
That the First Invention of Speech is Due not to the Needs but to the Passions

[1] It would seem then that the needs dictated the first gestures and the passions wrung the first voices [*voix*]. Following the track of the facts in the light of these distinctions, the origin of languages should perhaps be thought about altogether differently from the way in which it has been thought about until now. The genius of the oriental languages, the oldest ones known to us, completely contradicts the didactic development their composition is imagined to have followed. There is nothing methodical or reasoned about these languages; they are lively and figurative. The speech of the

first men is made out to us to have been languages of Geometers, whereas we see that they were languages of Poets.

[2] It had to be so. Man did not begin by reasoning but by feeling. It is claimed that men invented speech in order to express their needs; this seems to me an untenable opinion. The natural effect of the first needs was to separate men and not to bring them together. This is how it had to be for the species to spread and the earth to be promptly populated; otherwise mankind would have crowded into one corner of the world, while all the rest remained desert.

[3] From this alone it clearly follows that the origin of languages is not due to men's first needs; it would be absurd for the cause of their separation to give rise to the means that unites them. To what may this origin then be due? To the moral needs, the passions. All the passions bring together men whom the necessity to seek their subsistence forces to flee one another. Not hunger nor thirst, but love, hatred, pity, anger wrung their first voices from them. Fruit does not shrink from our grasp, one can eat it without speaking, one stalks the prey one means to devour in silence; but in order to move a young heart, to repulse an unjust aggressor, nature dictates accents, cries, plaints: [*381*] here [then] are the oldest invented words, and here is why languages were songlike and passionate before they were plain and methodical. None of this is true without qualification, but I shall come back to it in the sequel.

Chapter Three
That the First Language must have been Figurative

[1] Just as the first motives that made man speak were passions, his first expressions were Tropes. Figurative language arose first, proper [or literal] meaning was found last. Things were called by their true name only once they were seen in their genuine form. At first men spoke only poetry; only much later did it occur to anyone to reason.

[2] Now I sense the reader stopping me here, and asking how an expression can be figurative before it has a proper [or literal] meaning, since the figure consists solely in the transposing of meaning. I grant this; but in order to understand me, it is necessary to substitute the idea which the passion presents to us for the word which we are transposing; for words are transposed only because ideas also are, otherwise figurative language would signify nothing. I therefore reply with an example.

[3] A savage meeting others will at first have been frightened. His fright will have made him see these men as larger and stronger than himself; he will have called them *Giants*. After much experience he will have recognized that since these supposed Giants are neither bigger nor stronger than he, their stature did not fit the idea he had initially attached to the word Giant. He will therefore invent another name common both to them and to himself, for example the name *man*, and he will restrict the name *Giant* to the false object that had struck him during his illusion. This is how the figurative word arises before the proper [or literal] word does, when passion holds our eyes spellbound and the first idea which it presents to us is not that of the truth. What I have said regarding words and names applies equally [*382*] to turns of phrase. Since the illusory image presented by passion showed itself first, the language answering to it was invented first; subsequently it became metaphorical when the enlightened mind recognized its original error and came to use expressions of that first language only when moved by the same passions as had produced it.

Chapter Four
Of the Distinctive Characteristics of the First Language and of the Changes it must have Undergone

[1] Simple sounds issue naturally from the throat, the mouth is naturally more or less open; but the modifications of tongue and

palate by which we articulate require attention, practice, one does not make them without intending to make them, all children must learn them and some do not do so easily. In all languages the liveliest exclamations are inarticulate; cries, moans are simple voices; mutes, that is to say the deaf, utter only inarticulate sounds. Father Lamy cannot even conceive how men could ever have invented any others if God had not expressly taught them to speak. Articulations are few in number, sounds are infinite in number, the accents placed on them can similarly be multiplied; all musical notes are so many accents; it is true that our speech has only three or four, but the Chinese have many more; on the other hand they have fewer consonants. To this source of combinations add that of meter or quantity, and you will have a greater variety not only of words, but of differentiated syllables than the richest language needs.

[2] I do not doubt that if it still existed, the first language would have preserved certain original characteristics besides vocabulary and syntax which would distinguish it from all other languages. Not only would all the turns of phrase [*383*] in this language have to be in images, sentiments, figures; but in its mechanical aspect it would have to answer to its primary aim, and convey to the ear as well as to the understanding the almost inescapable impressions of passion seeking to communicate itself.

[3] Since our natural voices are inarticulate, words would have few articulations; a few interspersed consonants eliminating the hiatus between vowels would suffice to make them fluid and easy to pronounce. On the other hand its sounds would be extremely varied, and variety of accent would multiply the same voices; Quantity, rhythm would make possible still further combinations; so that since voices, sounds, accent, quantity, which are by nature, would leave little to be done by articulations, which are by convention, men would sing rather than speak; most root words would be sounds imitating either the accent of the passions, or the effect of sensible objects: onomatopoeia would be felt in them constantly.

[4] This language would have many synonyms to describe the same being in its different relations;* it would have few adverbs and abstract words to express these relations. It would have many

* Arabic is said to have more than a thousand different words for *camel*, more than a hundred to say a *sword*. Etc.

augmentatives, diminutives, compound words, expletive particles, to endow periods with cadence and sentences with fullness; It would have many irregularities and anomalies, it would neglect grammatical analogy in favor of the euphony, variety, harmony and beauty of sounds; instead of arguments it would have pithy sayings, it would persuade without convincing and depict without arguing; in some respects it would resemble Chinese, in others Greek, in still others Arabic. Develop these ideas in all their ramifications, and you will find that Plato's *Cratylus* is not as ridiculous as it appears to be.

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Chapter Five
Of Writing

[1] Anyone who studies the history and progress of languages will see that the more voices grow monotone the more do consonants increase in number, and that as accents disappear and quantities are equalized, they are replaced by grammatical combinations and new articulations: but these changes take place only gradually. In proportion as needs increase, as [men's] dealings get more entangled, as enlightenment spreads, language changes in character; it becomes more precise and less passionate; it substitutes ideas for sentiments, it no longer speaks to the heart but to the reason. As a result accent dies out, articulation spreads, language becomes more exact, clearer, but more sluggish, more muted and colder. This progress seems to me entirely natural.

[2] Another means of comparing languages and to tell how ancient they are is taken from writing, namely in inverse proportion to the perfection of this art. The cruder the writing, the more ancient the language. The first way of writing is not to depict sounds but the objects themselves, either directly as did the Mexicans, or by allegorical figures, as the Egyptians formerly did. This state corresponds to passionate language, and it already presupposes some social life and needs engendered by the passions.

[3] The second way is to represent words and propositions by conventional characters; which is possible only once the language

is fully formed and an entire people is united by shared Laws; for this already involves a twofold convention. Such is the writing of the Chinese; this is genuinely to depict sounds and to speak to the eyes.

[4] The third is to break up the speaking voice into a number of elementary parts, either vocal or articulated, by means of which all imaginable words and syllables could be formed. This way of writing, [*385*] which is ours, must have been imagined by peoples engaged in commerce who, since they traveled in various countries and had to speak various languages, were forced to invent characters that could be common to all of them. To do this is not exactly to depict speech, it is to analyze it.

[5] These three ways of writing correspond fairly precisely to the three different states in terms of which one can consider men assembled into nations. The depiction of objects suits savage peoples; signs of words and propositions, barbarian peoples, and the alphabet, civilized peoples.

[6] This last-mentioned invention ought therefore not to be regarded as a proof of the great antiquity of the people that invented it. On the contrary, it is likely that the people that found it bad in view easier communication with other peoples speaking other languages, that were at least its contemporaries and could have been more ancient than it. The same cannot be said of the two other methods. However, I admit that if we keep to history and the known facts, alphabetical writing appears to go as far back as any other. But it is not surprising that we lack records of times when people did not write.

[7] It is scarcely likely that those to whom it first occurred to analyze speech into elementary signs initially made very precise divisions. Later, when they perceived the inadequacy of their analysis, some increased the number of letters in their alphabet, as did the Greeks, the others left it at varying the meaning or the sound of letters by placing or combining them differently. This is how the inscriptions on the ruins of Tchelminar which Chardin has transcribed for us appear to have been written. They exhibit only two shapes or characters* which, however, differ in size and face in

* *People are surprised,* says Chardin, *that two shapes can make up so many letters, but I see nothing so very astonishing in this, since the letters of our Alphabet, which are twenty-three in number, are nevertheless made up of only two lines, the straight*

different directions. Yet, to judge by the perfection of the arts which the beauty of the charac[*386*]ters indicates,** and by the admirable monuments on which these inscriptions are found, this unknown and almost frighteningly ancient language must have been well developed at the time. I do not know why these astonishing ruins are talked about so little: when I read their description in Chardin, I feel transported to another world. All of this strikes me as intensely thought-provoking.

[8] The art of writing does not in any way depend on that of speaking. It depends on needs of a different nature which arise sooner or later depending on circumstances that are altogether independent of how long a people has been in existence, and that might never have taken place in very ancient Nations. It is not known for how many centuries the art of hieroglyph was perhaps the Egyptians' only writing, and the fact that a civilized people may find such writing adequate is proven by the example of the Mexicans, whose writing was even less convenient.

[9] When the Coptic Alphabet is compared with the Syriac or the Phoenician alphabet it is readily evident that one derives from the other, and it would not be surprising if the latter were the original, nor if the more recent people had instructed the more ancient in this respect. It is also clear that the Greek Alphabet derives from the Phoenician; indeed, it is evident that it must derive from it. Regardless of whether Cadmus or someone else brought it

and the curved, that is to say, that with a C and an I one makes up all the letters that compose our words.

** *This character is very beautiful in appearance, with nothing unclear or barbarous about it . . . It would seem that the letters were gilded; for several, especially capitals, still show some gold, and it is surely admirable and astounding that the air should not have succeeded in eroding this gilding in all these centuries . . However it is not at all surprising that not a single one of the world's scholars has ever made any sense of this writing, for it in no way resembles any writing that has come down to us; whereas all the systems of writing now known, except the Chinese, exhibit many affinities with one another and appear to derive from the same source. What is most astonishing about all this is that the Parsees, who are the descendants of the ancient Persians and who preserve and perpetuate their religion, not only are no more familiar with these characters than we are, but that their own characters no more resemble them than do ours . . . From which it follows that either it is a cabalistic character – which is unlikely, since it is used routinely and naturally everywhere throughout the building, and there is none other by the same chisel – or that it is of an antiquity so great that we hardly dare state it.* Indeed, Chardin would lead one to infer from this passage that at the time of Cyrus and of the Magi this character was already forgotten and as unknown as it is today.

over from Phoenicia, it seems certain in any case that the Greeks did not set out in quest of it but that the Phoenicians brought it over themselves: for they were the first and almost the only one of the Asian or African Peoples* to engage in trade with Europe and they came to the Greeks long before the Greeks visited them: Which in no way proves [*387*] that the Greek People is less ancient than the Phoenician.

[10] At first the Greeks not only took over the Phoenicians' characters, but even the direction of their lines from right to left. Later it occurred to them to write in furrows, that is to say by returning alternately from left to right and from right to left.* Finally they wrote as we do now, beginning every line anew from left to right. This progress is altogether natural: Writing in furrows is unquestionably the easiest to read. I am even surprised that it was not adopted along with printing, but since writing this way by hand is difficult, it must have fallen into disuse when manuscripts became more numerous.

[11] But even though the Greek alphabet derives from the Phoenician alphabet it by no means follows that the Greek language derives from the Phoenician language. One of these propositions does not entail the other, and it would appear that the Greek language was already very ancient, when the art of writing was still recent and even imperfectly developed among the Greeks. Until the siege of Troy they had only sixteen letters, if they had that many. It is said that Palamedes added four and Simonides the remaining four. All this is rather far-fetched. On the other hand, Latin, a more modern language, had a complete alphabet almost from its birth, though the first Romans hardly made use of it, since they began to write down their history so late, and lustra were only marked off with nail[-head]s.

[12] Besides, there is no absolutely fixed number of letters or of elements of speech; some have more, some fewer, depending on the language and on the various modifications accorded to vowels [*voix*] and consonants. Those who recognize only five vowels are seriously mistaken: the Greeks had seven written vowels, the first Romans

* I take the Carthaginians to be Phoenicians, since they were a colony of Tyre.

* See Pausanias, *Arcad*[*ia*]. In the beginnings the Latins wrote the same way, and from this according to Marius Victorinus came the word *versus*.

six,* the Gentlemen of Port Royal recognize ten, M. Duclos seventeen, and I have no doubt that many more would be found if habit had made the ear more sensitive [to perceive] and the mouth better trained [to produce] the various modifications of which [*388*] they are capable. Depending on the refinement of the organ[s of speech and hearing], a greater or smaller number of these modifications will be found between the acute *a* and the grave *o*, between the open *i* and the open *e*, etc. Anyone can experience this by moving from one vowel to the next in a continuous, modulated voice; for to the extent that one has made oneself more or less sensitive to them by dint of habit, one can single out more or fewer of these nuances and mark each with its own distinctive character, and this habit depends on the kinds of vocalizations [*voix*] common in the language to which the organ imperceptibly conforms. Much the same can be said about articulated letters, or consonants. But this is not how most nations went about it. They took over one another's alphabets and represented very different vocalizations [*voix*] and articulations by the same characters. This is why, unless one is very well trained, one invariably sounds ridiculous reading in a language other than one's own, no matter how faithful its spelling is [to the way it sounds].

[13] Writing, which might be expected to fix language, is precisely what adulterates it; it changes not its words but its genius; it substitutes precision for expressiveness. One conveys one's sentiments in speaking, and one's ideas in writing. In writing one is forced to use every word in conformity with common usage; but a speaker alters meanings by his tone of voice, determining them as he wishes; since he is less constrained to be clear, he stresses forcefulness more, and a language that is written cannot possibly retain for long the liveliness of one that is only spoken. What gets written down are words [*voix*], not sounds; yet in an accented language it is the sounds, the accents, the inflections of every sort, that constitute the greatest part of the vigor of the language; and make a phrase, that is otherwise common, the only appropriate one in the place where it is. The means used to substitute for this [feature of spoken language] enlarge [and] stretch written language, and as they

* *Greek records seven vowels, Romulus six, later usage five, once the Y was rejected as Greek.* Mart[ianus] Capel[la], I. iii.

pass from books into discourse, they enervate speech itself.* When we say everything as it would get written, all we do is to read as we speak.

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Chapter Six
Whether it is Likely that Homer Knew how to Write

[1] Regardless of what we may be told about the invention of the Greek alphabet, I believe it to be much more modern than it is said to be, and I base this opinion mainly on the character of the language. It has often occurred to me to doubt not only that Homer knew how to write, but even that in his time anyone wrote. I am very sorry that this doubt is so categorically contradicted by the Story of Bellerophon in the *Iliad*; since I, no less than Father Hardouin, have the misfortune to be rather stubborn about my paradoxes, I would be sorely tempted, if I were less ignorant, to extend my doubts to this Story itself, and to tax it with having been uncritically interpolated by the compilers of Homer. Not only are few traces of this art to be found in the rest of the *Iliad*; but I dare say that the entire *Odyssey* is but a tissue of stupidities and inanities which one or two letters would have reduced to thin air, whereas the Poem becomes reasonable and even rather well plotted on the assumption that its Heroes knew nothing of writing. If the *Iliad* had been written it would have been sung less often, Rhapsodes would have been less in demand and their number would have increased less. No other poet has been sung so much with the possible excep-

* The best such means and one that would be free of this defect would be punctuation, if it had not been left in such an imperfect state. Why, for example, have we not a vocative mark? The question mark which we do have was much less necessary; for one can see from the construction alone whether or not a question is being asked, at least in our language. *Are you coming* and *you are coming* are not the same thing. But how is one to distinguish in writing a man who is being [389] mentioned from one being addressed? This truly is an equivocation which the vocative mark would have eliminated. The same equivocation occurs in irony, when accent fails to convey it.

tion of Tasso in Venice and he only by Gondoliers, who are not great readers. The variety of dialects used by Homer is further strong presumptive evidence. Writing assimilates and blends the dialects which speech differentiates, and everything imperceptibly tends to conform to a common model. In proportion as a nation reads and studies, its dialects fade, and finally they survive only in vernacular form among the people, which reads little and writes not at all.

[2] Now since these two Poems are later than the siege of *[390]* Troy, it is hardly likely that the Greeks who conducted that siege were acquainted with writing, while the Poet who sang of it was not. For a long time these Poems were written only in men's memories; they were compiled in written form rather late and with considerable difficulty. It was when Greece began to abound in books and written poetry that the whole charm of Homer's poetry came to be felt by comparison. The other Poets wrote, Homer alone had sung, and these divine songs ceased to be listened to with delight only after Europe was blanketed with barbarians who took it upon themselves to judge what they were incapable of feeling.

Chapter Seven
Of Modern Prosody

[1] We have no idea of a sonorous and harmonious language that speaks as much by means of sounds as by means of voices [or words, *voix*]. It is an error to believe that written accents can replace vocal accents: Written accents are invented only once vocal accent is lost.*

* Some scholars claim counter to the common opinion and to the evidence of all ancient manuscripts that the Greeks knew and used the written signs called accents, and they base their opinion on two texts, both of which I will transcribe in order to permit the Reader to assess their true meaning.

Here is the first, taken from Cicero's treatise *Of the Orator*, Book III, Section 44: *After this painstaking labor [of ordering words], there remains rhythm and harmony of phrasing which, I fear, Catulus, may appear puerile to you. Indeed, according to the ancient masters, prose exhibited something analogous to verse, namely a kind of number: they wanted the phrases in speeches punctuated by pauses for breath and not*

What is more, we believe that we have [*391*] accents in our language, although we have none whatsoever: Our supposed accents are nothing but vowels or signs of quantity; they do not indicate any variation in sound. The proof is that all of these accents are produced either by unequal duration or by altered positions of the lips, the tongue, or the palate, all of which make for variety of voices [*voix*]; none by changes in the glottis, which make for the variety of sounds. Thus when our circumflex does not indicate a simple voice [*voix*], it indicates either a long vowel or nothing at all. Let us now see what it was for the Greeks.

[2] *Dionysus of Halicarnassus says that on the acute accent the tone was raised, and on the grave it was lowered by a fifth; the prosodic accent was thus also a musical accent, especially the circumflex, where the voice, after having risen by a fifth, dropped by another fifth on the same syllable.** This passage and its context clearly indicate that M. Duclos does not recognize a musical accent in our language but only the prosodic and the vocal accents; to these is added an orthographic accent which in no way affects the voice, or the sound, or

because of shortness of breath, nor did they want them indicated by copyists' marks, but by phrasing. Isocrates is said to have been the first who, as his disciple Naucrates put it, in order to flatter the ear, established the rule of subjecting prose, which until then had been without rule, to a rhythm. Indeed, the musicians, who were formerly also poets, in order to please, invented these two ways, verse and song, so that the rhythm of the words and the harmony of the sounds might prevent a surfeit of the ear. They thought that they should transfer these two innovations, I mean the art of regulating the voice, and that of indicating the end of phrases by some rhythmical pattern, from poetry into eloquence to the full extent that discourse, a serious matter, might permit it.

Here is the second, drawn from Isidore's *Origins*, Book 1, Chapter 20: *In addition, there are signs found in the most celebrated writers, and the ancients introduced them into verse and prose in order to punctuate their writings. The sign* [391] *is a specific mark, placed in the manner of a letter in order in each case to indicate the phrase pattern. The number of signs introduced in verse is 26, and their names are given below, etc.*

To me this indicates that the good copyists of Cicero's time separated words and that they used signs equivalent to our punctuation. It also indicates to me the invention of number [*i.e.* meter] and of prose declamation attributed to Isocrates. But I see nothing at all here of written signs or accents, and even if I did, it would justify only a single conclusion which I do not deny and which is in perfect conformity with my principles, namely that when the Romans began to study Greek, the Copyists, in order to help them with its pronunciation, invented signs for accents, aspiration, and prosody; but it would not at all follow that these signs were used by the Greeks, who had no need of them.

* M. Duclos, *Rem*[*arques*] *sur la gram*[*maire*] *génér*[*ale*] *et raisonnée*, p. 30.

the quantity, but which sometimes indicates an omitted letter, as does the circumflex, while at other times it specifies the meaning of an otherwise equivocal monosyllable, such as the so-called grave accent that distinguishes the adverb of place *où* [where] from the disjunctive particle *ou* [or], and *à* [to] used as an article from the same *a* [has] used as a verb: this accent differentiates between these monosyllables for the eye alone, nothing differentiates between their pronunciation.** Thus the definition of the accent generally accepted by the French [*392*] does not fit a single one of the accents in their language.

[3] I fully expect that some of their grammarians having been taught that accents mark a raising or a lowering of the voice will here again tax me with paradoxes, and for want of paying sufficiently close attention to experience they will think that they are using different movements of the glottis to produce the very accents which they produce exclusively by opening the mouth or placing the tongue in different ways. But here is what I suggest they do in order to verify what actually takes place and to prove my point incontrovertibly.

[4] Attune your voice perfectly to some musical instrument and on this unison note pronounce, one after the other, all the most variously accented French words you can think of; since only the grammatical and not the rhetorical accent is at issue here, these different words need not even make any sustained sense. Make a note of whether, as you speak in this fashion, you do not indicate all the accents as distinctly and as clearly at this one level of sound as you would if you spoke unhampered, varying the tone of your voice. Now assuming this to be the case, and indisputably it is, I say that since all your accents are expressed at the same pitch, they do not indicate different sounds. I cannot imagine what might be said in rebuttal to this.

[5] Any language in which the same words can be set to several melodies has no settled musical accent. If the accent were fixed, so

** It might seem that this is the accent by which the Italians distinguish between for example the verbal form *è* [is] and the conjunction *e* [and]; but the first is perceptible to the ear as a stronger and more emphatic sound, which makes the accent with which it is written a vocal accent: an observation which Buonmattei should not have failed to make.

would the melody be. As soon as the tune is a matter of choice, accent counts for naught.

[6] All modern European languages are more or less in the same situation; I do not even exclude Italian. By itself, Italian is no more a musical language than is French. The difference is simply that one lends itself to music and the other does not.

[7] All this tends to confirm the following principle, that by a natural progress all lettered languages must change character and lose force as they gain in clarity, that the more one insists on perfecting grammar and logic the more one accelerates this progress, and that in order to cause a language to grow rapidly frigid and monotonous one need only establish academies among the people who speak it. [*393*]

[8] Derivative languages are recognized by the discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation. The older and the purer languages are, the less arbitrary is their pronunciation, and hence the less complicated are the characters that indicate pronunciation. *All of the ancients' prosodic signs*, says M. Duclos, *even assuming that they were used with great consistency, still were not as important as usage.* I would go further; they replaced it. The ancient Hebrews had neither punctuation nor accents, they did not even have vowels. When other Nations began to try to speak Hebrew and the Jews spoke other languages, theirs lost its accent; [punctuation] signs and [vowel] points became necessary to set it in order, and this restored the meaning of words far more than it did the pronunciation of the language. The Jews of today, speaking Hebrew, would no longer be understood by their ancestors.

[9] In order to know English, one has to learn it twice, once to read it, the other to speak it. If a foreigner glances at the book from which an Englishman is reading aloud, he will perceive no connection at all between what he sees and what he hears. Why is this so? Because England was conquered by a succession of peoples and, while the words continued to be written as before, their pronunciation has often changed. There is a considerable difference between the signs that establish the meaning of what is written and those that govern pronunciation. It would be easy to construct a language made up exclusively of the consonants, which would be very clear in its written form, but could not be spoken. Algebra has something

of this language. When the spelling of a language is clearer than its pronunciation, it indicates that this language is written more than it is spoken; Such may have been the learned language of the Egyptians; such are for us the dead languages. In the case of languages burdened with useless consonants, writing even seems to have preceded speech, and it is difficult to resist the suspicion that this is what happened with Polish. If it did, then Polish must be the most frigid of all languages.

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Chapter Eight
General and Local Differences in the Origin of Languages

[1] Everything I have said so far applies to primitive languages in general and to such progress as results from their age, but it explains neither their origin nor their differences. The principal cause for the differences between them is local, a consequence of the climates in which they are born and of the manner in which they are formed, [and] it is to this cause that one has to go back in order to conceive the general and characteristic difference that is found to obtain between the languages of the south and those of the north. The great failing of Europeans is always to philosophize about the origin of things in the light of what happens right around them. They never fail to show us the first men living in a barren and harsh land, dying of cold and hunger, anxious to secure shelter and clothing; everywhere they see only the snow and ice of Europe, without taking into account that the human species like all the others was born in the warm countries and that in two-thirds of the globe winter is hardly known. When one proposes to study men one has to look close by; but in order to study man one has to learn to cast one's glance afar; one has to begin by observing the differences in order to discover the properties.

[2] Mankind born in the warm countries spreads from there to the cold countries; it is in these that it multiplies and then flows

back into the warm countries. To this action and reaction are due the earth's revolutions and the ceaseless agitation of its inhabitants. Let us try to follow the order of nature itself in our inquiries. I enter upon a long digression about a topic so hackneyed as to have become trivial, but to which one nevertheless always has to return however reluctantly in order to discover the origin of human institutions.

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Chapter Nine
The Formation of Southern Languages

[1] In the first times* men scattered over the face of the earth had no society other than that of the family, no laws other than those of nature, no language other than gesture and a few inarticulate sounds.** They were not bound by any idea of common brotherhood and, since they had no arbiter other than force, they believed themselves to be one another's enemies. It was to their weakness and ignorance that they owed this opinion. Knowing nothing they feared everything, they attacked in order to defend themselves. A man abandoned alone on the face of the earth at the mercy of mankind had to be a ferocious animal. He was ready to inflict on others all the harm he feared from them. Fear and weakness are the sources of cruelty.

[2] The social affections develop in us only with our knowledge. Pity, although natural to man's heart, would remain eternally inactive without imagination to set it in motion. How do we let our-

* I call first the times of men's dispersion, regardless of the age one chooses to assign to mankind at that period.

** Genuine languages have not a domestic origin; only a more comprehensive and lasting convention can establish them. The Savages of America almost never speak except when away from home; in his hut everyone remains silent and speaks to his family by means of signs, and these signs are infrequent because a Savage is less restless, less impatient than a European, because he has not as many needs and takes care to attend to them himself.

selves be moved to pity? By transporting ourselves outside ourselves; by identifying with the suffering being. We suffer only to the extent that we judge it to suffer; we suffer not in ourselves but in it. Think how much acquired knowledge this transport presupposes! How could I imagine evils of which I have no idea? How could I suffer when I see another suffer if I do not even know that he suffers, if I do not know what he and I have in common? Someone who has never reflected cannot be clement, or just, or pitying; nor can he be wicked [396] and vindictive. He who imagines nothing feels only himself; in the midst of mankind he is alone.

[3] Reflection is born of the comparison of ideas, and it is their variety that leads us to compare them. Whoever sees only a single object has no occasion to make comparisons. Whoever sees only a small number and always the same ones from childhood on still does not compare them, because the habit of seeing them deprives him of the attention required to examine them: but as a new object strikes us, we want to know it, we look for relations between it and the objects we do know; this is how we learn to observe what we see before us, and how what is foreign to us leads us to examine what touches us.

[4] Apply these ideas to the first men, you will see the reason for their barbarism. Never having seen anything other than what was around them, they did not know even it; they did not know themselves. They had the idea of a Father, a son, a brother, but not of a man. Their hut held all those who were like themselves; a stranger, an animal, a monster were all the same to them: outside of themselves and their family, the whole universe was naught to them.

[5] Hence the apparent contradictions one sees in the fathers of nations: Such naturalness and such inhumanity, such ferocious ways [*moeurs*] and such tender hearts, so much love for their family and aversion toward their species. All their sentiments concentrated among their near ones were therefore the more energetic. Everything they knew they held dear. Enemies of the rest of the world which they neither saw nor knew, they hated only what they could not know.

[6] These times of barbarism were the golden age; not because men were united, but because they were separated. Everyone, it is said, considered himself to be master of everything; that may be

so; but no one knew or desired anything but what was ready to hand: his needs, far from drawing him closer to those like himself, draw him away from them. Men may have attacked one another upon meeting, but they rarely met. Everywhere the state of war prevailed, yet the whole earth was at peace.

[7] The first men were hunters or shepherds and not tillers of the soil; the first goods were herds [397] not fields. Before ownership of the earth was divided no one thought of cultivating it. Agriculture is an art that requires tools; to sow in order to reap is a measure requiring foresight. Man in society seeks to expand, isolated man contracts. Beyond where his eye can see or his arm reach, there no longer is either right or property for him. Once the Cyclops has rolled the stone in front of the entrance to his cave his herds and he are safe. But who would protect the harvest of a man for whom the laws do not watch out?

[8] I will be told that Cain was a tiller of the soil and that Noah planted a vineyard. Why not? They were alone; what did they have to fear? Besides this does nothing to counter my point; I have stated above how I conceive of the first times. When Cain became a fugitive he was after all forced to give up agriculture; the wandering life of Noah's descendants must have made them forget it also; the earth had to be populated before it could be cultivated; the two cannot readily be done together. During the first dispersion of mankind, until the family was stabilized and man had a fixed dwelling, there was no more agriculture. Peoples that do not settle cannot possibly cultivate the soil; such formerly were the Nomads, such were the Arabs living in their tents, the Scythians in their wagons, such are still today the wandering Tartars, and the Savages of America.

[9] As a rule of all of the peoples whose origin we know the first barbarians are found to be voracious and carnivorous rather than agricultural and granivorous. The Greeks [refer by] name [to] the person who first taught them to till the soil, and it would seem that they did not know this art until quite late: But when they add that until the time of Triptolemus they lived solely off acorns, they make an implausible claim and one which their own history belies; for they had been eating meat prior to Triptolemus, since he forbade them to eat it. Besides, it would seem that they did not take this prohibition very seriously.

[10] At Homer's feasts an ox is slaughtered to regale one's guests, as one might nowadays slaughter a suckling pig. On reading that Abraham served a calf to three people, that Eumaeus had two kids roasted for Ulysses's dinner, and that Rebecca did the same for [*398*] her husband's, one may gather what terrible devourers of meat men were in those times. To get a notion of the meals of the ancients one need only consider the meals of present-day Savages; I almost said those of Englishmen.

[11] The first cake that was eaten was the communion of mankind. When men began to settle they cleared a bit of land around their hut, it was a garden rather than a field. The little grain they gathered was ground between two stones, made into a few cakes baked in ashes or over embers or on a hot stone, and eaten only at feasts. This ancient practice consecrated among the Jews by Passover is preserved to this day in Persia and in the [East] Indies. They eat only unleavened breads there, and these breads made up of thin sheets are baked and eaten at every meal. Only when more bread came to be needed did it occur to people to leaven it, for small quantities do not readily lend themselves to leavening.

[12] I know that large-scale agriculture is found as early as the time of the patriarchs. The proximity of Egypt must have introduced it into Palestine quite early. The book of Job, the oldest, perhaps, of all extant books, speaks of the cultivation of fields, it lists five hundred pairs of oxen as part of Job's wealth; the term pairs indicates that these oxen were yoked for work; it is explicitly stated that these oxen were plowing when the Sabeans carried them off, and one can readily gather what an expanse of land five hundred teams of oxen must have plowed.

[13] All this is true; but let us not confuse different times. What we call the age of the patriarchs is very remote from the first age. Scripture lists ten generations between them in those centuries when men lived a long time. What did they do during these ten generations? We know nothing about it. Since they lived scattered and almost without society they scarcely spoke, how could they have written, and given the regularity of their isolated life what events would they have transmitted to us?

[14] Adam spoke; Noah spoke; granted. Adam had been taught by God himself. When they separated, the children of Noah gave up agriculture, and the common language perished together with

the first society. This would have happened even if there had never [*399*] been a tower of [B]abel. Solitaries living on desert islands have been known to forget their own language: After several generations away from their country men rarely preserve their original language, even when they work together and live in society with one another.

[15] Scattered throughout this vast desert of a world, men relapsed into the dull barbarism they would have been in if they had been born of the earth. By following [the thread of] these entirely natural ideas it is easy to reconcile the authority of Scripture with ancient records, and there is no need to treat as fables traditions that are as old as are the peoples that have handed them down to us.

[16] In this brutish state they had to live. The most active, the most robust, those who were always on the move could only live off fruit and the hunt; so they became hunters, violent, bloodthirsty and, in time, warriors, conquerors, usurpers. History has stained its records with the crimes of these first Kings; war and conquests are nothing but manhunts. Once they had conquered, it only remained for them to devour men. This is what their successors learned to do.

[17] The greater number, less active and more peaceable, stopped as soon as they could, gathered cattle, tamed them, taught them to heed man's voice, learned to tend them and increase their number so as to have them for food; and this is how pastoral life began.

[18] Human industry expands with the needs that give rise to it. Of the three ways of life available to man, hunting, herding, and agriculture, the first develops strength, skill, speed of body, courage and cunning of soul, it hardens man and makes him ferocious. The land of the hunters does not long remain that of the hunt.* Game has to be pursued over great distances, hence horsemanship. Game that flees has to be caught, hence light arms, the sling, the arrow, the javelin. [*400*] The pastoral art, father of repose and of

* The practice of hunting is not at all favorable to population [growth]. This observation, made when the Islands of Santo Domingo and Tortuga were inhabited by buccaneers, is confirmed by the state of northern America. None of the fathers of large nations were hunters by [e]state; all of them were farmers or shepherds. Hunting must then here be regarded less as a primary means of subsistence than as a supplement to the pastoral state.

the indolent passions, is the most self-sufficient art. It almost effortlessly provides man with food and clothing; It even provides him with his dwelling; the tents of the first shepherds were made of animal skins: so were the roofs of the ark and the tabernacle of Moses. As for agriculture, it arises later and involves all the arts; it introduces property, government, laws, and gradually wretchedness and crimes, inseparable for our species from the knowledge of good and evil. Hence the Greeks viewed Triptolemus not merely as the inventor of a useful art, but as a founder and a wise man to whom they owed their first education and their first laws. Moses, on the other hand, appears to have disapproved of agriculture by attributing its invention to a wicked man and making God reject his offerings: the first tiller of the ground would seem to have proclaimed by his character the bad effects of his art. The author of Genesis had seen farther than had Herodotus.

[19] The preceding division corresponds to the three states of man considered in relation to society. The savage is a hunter, the barbarian a herdsman, civil man a tiller of the soil.

[20] So that regardless of whether one inquires into the origin of the arts or studies the earliest morals [or ways of life, *moeurs*] everything is seen to be related in its principle to the means by which men provide for their subsistence, and as for those among these means that unite men, they are a function of the climate and of the nature of the soil. Hence the diversity of languages and their opposite characteristics must also be explained by the same causes.

[21] Mild climates, lush and fertile lands were the first to be populated and the last where nations were formed, because there men could more easily do without one another, and the needs that cause society to be born made themselves felt later there.

[22] Assume perpetual spring on earth; assume water, cattle, pastures everywhere; assume men issuing from the hands of nature and dispersed throughout all this: I cannot imagine how they would ever have renounced their primitive freedom and left the isolated and pastoral existence that so well suits their natural indolence,*

* The extent to which man is naturally lazy is simply inconceivable. It would seem that he lives solely in order to sleep, to vegetate, to remain motionless; he can scarcely decide to go through the motions required to keep from dying of hunger. Nothing keeps the savages loving their state as much as this delicious indolence. The passions that cause man to be restless, provident, active, are born only in

[*401*] in order to impose on themselves without any necessity the slavery, the labors, and the miseries that are inseparable from the social state.

[23] He who willed man to be sociable inclined the globe's axis at an angle to the axis of the universe with a touch of the finger. With this slight motion I see the face of the earth change and the vocation of mankind settled: I hear, far off, the joyous cries of a heedless multitude; I see Palaces and Cities raised; I see the birth of the arts, laws, commerce; I see peoples forming, expanding, dissolving, succeeding one another like the waves of the sea: I see men clustered in a few points of their habitation in order there to devour one another, turning the remainder of the world into a dreadful desert; a worthy monument to social union and the usefulness of the arts.

[24] The earth nourishes men; but after the first needs have dispersed them other needs bring them back together, and it is only then that they speak and cause others to speak about them. In order not to be found in contradiction with myself I must be allowed time to explain myself.

[25] When one inquires in what regions the fathers of mankind were born, where the first colonies set out from, where the first emigrations originated, you will not name the happy climes of Asia Minor or of Sicily, or of Africa, or even of Egypt; you will name the sands of Chaldea, the rocks of Phoenicia. You will find that it is so at all times. Regardless of how many Chinese populate China, it also gets populated by Tartars; the Scythians inundated Europe and Asia; the mountains of Switzerland are currently pouring into our fertile regions a continuous stream of colonists that promises not to dry up.

[26] It is natural, it is said, that the inhabitants of a barren land leave it for a better. Very well; but why does this better land make room for others, instead of swarming with its [*402*] own inhabitants? To leave a barren land, one has to be there in the first place. Why then are so many men born there rather than elsewhere? One might expect harsh lands to be populated only with the excess from fertile

society. To do nothing is man's primary and strongest passion after that of self-preservation. If one looked at it more closely, one would find that even among us people work only in order to get to rest: it is still laziness that makes us industrious.

lands, and yet we see the opposite to be the case. Most Latin peoples called themselves aboriginal,* whereas much more fertile Magna Graecia was populated exclusively by foreigners. All Greek peoples acknowledged that they originally grew out of various colonies, except the one whose soil was the worst, namely the Attic people which called itself Autochthonous or born from itself. Finally without piercing the night of time, modern centuries provide one conclusive piece of evidence; indeed, where on earth is the climate drearier than in what has been called the factory of mankind?

[27] Human associations are in large measure the work of accidents of nature; local floods, overflowing seas, volcanic eruptions, major earthquakes, fires started by lightning and destroying forests, everything that must have frightened and dispersed the savage inhabitants of a land must afterwards have brought them back together to restore in common their common losses. The frequent ancient traditions about natural disasters show what instruments providence used to force humans to come together. Ever since societies have been established these great accidents have ceased and become increasingly rare; it would seem that this too has to be so; the same calamities that brought scattered men together would disperse those who are united.

[28] The revolutions of the seasons are another more general and more permanent cause that must have produced the same effect in the climates subject to these changes. Forced to make provisions for winter, people have to help one another and are thus compelled to establish some kind of convention amongst themselves. When expeditions become impossible and they can no longer get about because of the extreme cold, boredom unites them as much as [did] need: the Lapps, buried in their ice, the Eskimos, the most savage of all peoples, come together in their caverns in winter [*403*] and in summer no longer know one another. Increase their development and their enlightenment by one degree, and they are united forever.

[29] Neither man's stomach nor his intestines are made to digest raw meat; generally he cannot stand its taste. With the possible single exception of the Eskimos whom I just mentioned, even sav-

* The terms *Autochthons* and *Aborigines* merely mean that the first inhabitants of the land were savages without societies, without laws, without traditions, and that they populated it before they spoke

ages grill their meats. Fire, in addition to being necessary for cooking meats, also delights the eye and its warmth is pleasing to the body. The sight of the flame which causes animals to flee attracts man.* Around a common hearth people gather, feast, dance; the sweet bonds of familiarity imperceptibly draw man to his kind, and on this rustic hearth burns the sacred fire that introduces the first sentiment of humanity into men's hearts.

[30] In warm lands, unevenly scattered springs and rivers are further meeting places all the more necessary inasmuch as men can do without water even less than they can do without fire. Barbarians who live off their herds are especially in need of common watering places, and we learn from the history of the most remote ages that this is indeed where their treaties as well as their quarrels began.* Easy access to water can delay the emergence of society among those who live where it is plentiful. In arid places on the other hand people had to cooperate in sinking wells and digging ditches to provide water for their cattle. Associations of men are found there almost from time immemorial, for the land was either going to remain desert or be made inhabitable by man's labor. But our tendency to refer everything to our own practices calls for some reflections on this subject.

[31] The first state of the earth differed greatly from its present state, when it is seen embellished or disfigured by [*404*] men's hand. The chaos which the Poets feigned among the elements did reign among its productions. In those remote times when revolutions were frequent, when numberless accidents altered the nature of the soil and the features of the terrain, everything grew confusedly, trees, vegetables, shrubs, grasses; no species had time to seize the terrain that suited it best and to root out the others from it; they

* Fire gives much pleasure to animals as well as to man, once they have become accustomed to its sight and felt its gentle warmth. Often it would even prove no less useful to them than to us, if only to warm their young. Yet no one has ever heard of any animal, wild or domestic, which, even by imitating us, acquired the skills required to make fire. And these are the reasoning beings that are said to form a fugitive prehuman society, although their intelligence could not rise to the level of drawing sparks from a stone and catching them [on tinder], or at least of keeping some abandoned fire going! Upon my word, the philosophers quite openly mock us. Their writings clearly show that they indeed take us for beasts.

* See the instance of the one as well as of the other between Abraham and Abimelech in connection with the well of the Oath in chapter 21 of *Genesis*.

divided slowly, little by little, and then there would be a sudden upheaval that confused everything.

{32} The relation between man's needs and the productions of the earth is such that so long as it is populated, everything subsists; but before men united had, by their common labors, introduced a balance among its productions, they could all subsist only if nature alone attended to the equilibrium which the hand of men preserves today; nature maintained or restored this equilibrium by revolutions, just as men maintain or restore it by their inconstancy. The war that did not yet reign between them seemed to reign between the elements; men did not burn cities, dig mines, fell trees; but nature sparked volcanoes, stirred up earthquakes, the fire of Heaven devoured forests. A bolt of lightning, a flood, a volcanic eruption did then in a few hours what a hundred thousand human hands now do in a century. I see no other way in which the system could have subsisted and the equilibrium maintained itself. In the two realms of organized beings the larger species would in the long run have absorbed the smaller.* The entire earth would soon have been covered with nothing but trees and ferocious beasts; eventually everything would have perished.

{33} The water cycle which nourishes the earth would little by little have broken down. [405] Mountains get worn down and smaller, rivers silt up, the sea rises and spreads, everything imperceptibly tends toward the same level; the hand of men slows this drift and delays this progress; without them it would proceed faster, and the earth might perhaps already be under water. Springs are poorly distributed and, prior to human labor, they flowed less evenly, fertilized the earth less [adequately], made its inhabitants' supply of drinking water more difficult. Rivers were often inaccessible, their banks steep or marshy: since human art did not retain

* It is claimed that by a kind of natural action and reaction the various species of the animal kingdom would of themselves maintain themselves in a perpetual balancing [or seesaw] which would be tantamount to their being in equilibrium. Once the devouring species has, it is said, increased too much at the expense of the devoured species, the first, finding no more food, will have to decrease and allow the other time to replenish its numbers; until it again provides ample food for the first and once more decreases while the devouring species is replenished anew. But such an oscillation seems quite implausible to me: for according to this system there has to be a period during which the preyed-upon species increases and the predator species decreases; which seems to me to be altogether contrary to reason.

them in their beds they often overflowed, flooded one bank or the other, changed directions and course, divided into various branches; sometimes they would dry up, sometimes quicksand blocked access to them; it was as if they did not exist, and men died of thirst surrounded by water.

[34] How many arid lands are inhabitable only thanks to men's draining and channeling of rivers. Almost the whole of Persia subsists only by means of this artifice: China abounds in People because of its many canals: without their canals, the Low Countries would be *flooded* by rivers, as they would be *flooded* by the sea without their dikes: Egypt, the most fertile country on earth, is inhabitable only as a result of human labor. On the great plains where there are no rivers and where the gradient is not sufficiently steep there is no alternative to wells. So that the reason why the first peoples mentioned in history did not live in lush lands or easily accessible shores is not that these happy climes were deserted, but that their numerous inhabitants could do without one another and therefore lived isolated in their families with no outside communication for a longer time. But in arid regions, where water could only be had from wells, people had no alternative but to get together to dig them, or at least to agree about their use. Such must have been the origin of societies and of languages in warm lands.

[35] Here the first ties between families were established; here meetings between the sexes took place. Young girls came to fetch water for the household, young men came to water their herds. Here eyes accustomed from childhood *[406] to forever* the same objects began to see sweeter ones. The heart was moved by these new objects, an unfamiliar attraction rendered it less savage, it felt the pleasure of not being alone. Imperceptibly water came to be more needed, the cattle were thirsty more often; one arrived in haste and left with reluctance. In this happy age when nothing recorded the hours, nothing required them to be counted; time had no other measure than enjoyment and boredom. Beneath old oaks, conquerors of years, spirited young people gradually forgot their ferociousness, little by little they tamed one another; in striving to make themselves understood they learned to make themselves intelligible. Here the first festivals took place; feet skipped with joy, an eager gesture no longer proved adequate, the voice accompanied it with passionate accents, pleasure and desire merged into one and

made themselves felt together. Here, finally, was the true cradle of peoples, and from the pure crystal of the fountains sprang the first fires of love.

[36] What! were men born of the earth before that time? Did generation succeed upon generation without union between the sexes and without any mutual understanding? No, there were families, but there were no Nations; there were domestic languages, but there were no popular languages; there were marriages, but there was no love. Each family was self-sufficient and propagated itself from its own stock alone. Children born of the same parents grew up together and little by little found ways to make themselves intelligible to one another; the distinction between the sexes appeared with age, natural inclinations sufficed to unite them, instinct took the place of passion, habit took the place of predilection, people became husband and wife without having ceased to be brother and sister.* None of this was sufficiently lively to untie tongues, none of it such as to wring the accents of the ardent passions sufficiently frequently to establish them as institutions, and [*407*] the same may be said of the occasional and not particularly pressing needs that may have led some men to collaborate on common labors: one started the basin of the fountain, and another later finished it, often without their having had the slightest need of any agreements and sometimes without even having seen one another. In a word, in mild climates, in fertile regions it took all the liveliness of the agreeable passions to start men speaking. The first languages, daughters of pleasure and not of need, long remained under the aegis of their father; their seductive accent faded only with the sentiments that had given them birth when new needs that had been introduced among men forced everyone to think only of himself and to withdraw his heart within himself.

* The first men had to marry their sisters. In view of the simplicity of the first morals this practice continued without prejudice as long as families remained isolated and even after the most ancient peoples had come together; but the law that abolished it is no less sacred for being by human institution. Those who view it solely in terms of the bond it established between families fail to see its most important aspect. In view of the intimacy between the sexes that inevitably attends upon domestic life, the moment such a sacred law ceased to speak to the heart and to awe the senses, men would cease to be upright, and the most frightful morals would soon cause the destruction of mankind.

Chapter Ten
The Formation of the Languages of the North

[1] Eventually all men become alike, but the order of their progress differs. In southern climates where nature is prodigal needs are born of the passions, in cold countries, where it is miserly, the passions are born of the needs, and the languages, sad daughters of necessity, reflect their harsh origin.

[2] Although man gets accustomed to the inclemencies of the weather, to cold, to discomfort, even to hunger, there nevertheless is a point at which nature succumbs. A victim of these cruel trials, everything that is weak perishes; everything else is strengthened, and there is no middle ground between vigor and death. This is why northern peoples are so sturdy; it is not initially the climate that made them so, but it suffered only those who were so, and it is not surprising that the children keep their fathers' good constitution.

[3] It is immediately evident that men who are more sturdy must have less delicate organs, their voices must be rougher and stronger. Besides, what a difference between touching inflections that issue from movements of the soul and the cries wrested by physical needs? [*408*] In those dreadful climates where everything is dead nine months out of the year, where the sun warms the air for a few weeks only in order to let the inhabitants know the benefits of which they are deprived and to prolong their misery, in those regions where the earth yields whatever it yields only after much labor and where the source of life seems to reside more in the hands than in the heart, men, constantly involved in providing for their subsistence, hardly thought about gentler bonds, everything was confined to physical impulsion, opportunity dictated choice, ease dictated preference. Idleness, which feeds the passions, yielded to labor, which represses them. Before one could think about living happy, one had to think about living. Mutual need united men far more effectively than sentiment would have done, society was formed solely through industry, the ever-present danger of perishing did not permit of a language restricted to gesture, and their first word was not *love me* [*aimez-moi*] but *help me* [*aidez-moi*].

[4] These two expressions, although quite similar, are spoken in a very different tone. They had to arouse not sentiment, but understanding; it was therefore not a matter of energy but of clarity. Accent, which was not forthcoming from the heart, was replaced by strong and clear articulations, and if the form of the language made some natural impression, this impression only contributed to its harshness.

[5] Indeed, men of the North are not without passions, but theirs are passions of another kind. The passions of warm climates are voluptuous passions related to love and softness. Nature does so much for those who live there that they have almost nothing left to do. So long as an Asian has women and rest he is content. But in the North, where people consume a great deal and the soil is barren, men subject to so many needs are easily irritated; everything people do around them worries them: since they have a hard time subsisting, the poorer they are, the more they cling to the little they have; to get close to them is to threaten their life. This is what accounts for their irascible temperament, so quick to lash out furiously at everything that offends them. Therefore their most natural voices [*voix*] are those of anger and threats, and these voices are invariably accompanied by strong articulations that make them harsh and noisy.

[*409*]

Chapter Eleven
Reflections on these Differences

[1] Such in my opinion are the most general physical causes of the characteristic difference between primitive languages. Those of the South must have been lively, resonant, accentuated, eloquent, and often obscure by dint of energy: those of the North must have been muted, crude, articulated, shrill, monotone, clear by dint of their words rather than of good construction. Modern languages, intermingled and recast hundreds of times, still retain something of these differences. French, English, German are the private languages of men who help one another, who argue with one another in cold

blood, or of excited men who get angry; but the ministers of the Gods proclaiming the sacred mysteries, the Wise giving laws to the peoples, leaders swaying the masses must speak Arabic or Persian.* Our languages are better written than spoken, and it is more pleasant to read us than it is to listen to us. In contrast oriental languages lose their life and warmth when they are written down. Only half the meaning is conveyed by the words, all its force is in the accents. To judge the orientals' genius from their Books is like trying to paint a man's portrait from his corpse.

[2] In order to assess men's actions properly, one has to consider them in all their relations and this is something we are simply not taught to do. When we put ourselves in the place of others we always put ourselves in their place as circumstances have modified us, not as they must have modified them, and when we think that we are judging them in the light of reason, we are only comparing their prejudices with ours. A man able to read a little Arabic smiles as he leafs through the Koran, who, if he had heard Mohammed himself proclaim it in that eloquent and rhythmic language, in that resonant and persuasive voice which seduced the ear before it did the heart, constantly animating his pithy sayings with the accent of enthusiasm, would have prostrated himself on the ground crying out, Great [*410*] Prophet, Messenger of God, lead us to glory, to martyrdom; we want to conquer or to die for you. Fanaticism always appears ludicrous to us, because it has no voice to command a hearing among us. Even our fanatics are not true fanatics, they are but knaves or madmen. Our languages, instead of inflections for men inspired, only provide cries for men possessed by the Devil.

Chapter Twelve
The Origin of Music

[1] Together with the first voices [*voix*] were formed either the first articulations or the first sounds, depending on the kind of passion

* Turkish is a northern language.

that dictated them. Anger wrests [from us] threatening cries which the tongue and the palate articulate; but the voice of tenderness is gentler, it is modulated by the glottis, and this voice becomes a sound. However, its accents are more or less frequent, its inflections more or less acute depending on the sentiment that accompanies it. Thus cadence and sounds are born together with syllables: passion rouses all of the [vocal] organs to speech, and adorns the voice with their full brilliance; thus verse, song, speech have a common origin. Around the fountains which I have mentioned, the first speeches were the first songs: the periodic and measured recurrences of rhythm, the melodious inflections of accents, caused poetry and music to be born together with language, or rather all this was nothing other than language itself in those happy climates and those happy ages when the only pressing needs that required another's collaboration were needs born of the heart.

[2] The first stories, the first declamations, the first laws were in verse; poetry was discovered before prose; it had to be so, since the passions spoke before reason. The same was true of music; *[411]* at first there was no music other than melody, nor any other melody than the varied sound of speech, accents formed the song, quantities formed measure, and people spoke as much by sonorities and rhythm as by articulations and voices. To say and to sing were formerly one, says Strabo; and, he adds, this shows poetry to be the source of eloquence.* He should have said that both sprang from the same source and were initially but the same thing. In view of how the first societies united was it surprising that the first stories were set in verse and that the first laws were sung? Was it surprising that the first Grammarians subordinated their art to music and were at one and the same time teachers of both?**

[3] A language that has only articulations and voices [*voix*] is therefore in possession of only half its resources; it conveys ideas, it is true, but in order to convey sentiments, images, it still needs rhythm and sounds [or sonorities], that is to say a melody: this is what the Greek language had, and ours lacks.

* Geogr[aphy], B[oo]k 1.

** *Architas and Aristoxenus, indeed, thought grammar comprehended under music, and that the same persons taught both subjects . . . So did Eupolis, in whose work Prodamus teaches both music and letters. And Maricas, that is to say Hyperbolus, acknowledges that the musicians teach him nothing but letters.* Quintil[ian], B[oo]k 1, ch[apter] 10.

[4] We are always astounded by the prodigious effects of eloquence, poetry, and music among the Greeks; we cannot get these effects into our heads, because we no longer experience anything like them, and all we can bring ourselves to do in view of the strong evidence regarding them is to pretend that we believe them as a concession to our scholars.* Burette, having transcribed [*412*] some pieces of Greek music as best he could into our musical notation, was so naïve as to have these pieces performed at the Academy of Belles Lettres, and the Academicians were so forbearing as to listen to them. I rather admire such an experiment in a country whose music all other nations find indecipherable. Give any foreign Musicians you please a solo from a French opera to perform, I defy you to recognize any part of it. Yet these very Frenchmen took it upon themselves to pass judgment on the melody of one of Pindar's Odes set to Music two thousand years ago!

[5] I have read that American Indians seeing the amazing effects of firearms used to pick musket balls up off the ground; then hurling them by hand while giving out a loud cry with their mouth, they were utterly surprised to find that they had not killed anyone. Our orators, our musicians, our scholars are like those Indians. The wonder is not that we no longer achieve with our music what the Greeks achieved with theirs, it would be, rather, if with such different instruments the same effects were produced.

* Some allowance must probably always be made for Greek exaggeration, but to make such allowances to a point where all differences vanish is really too great a concession to modern prejudice. "It was," says the Abbé Terrasson, "when the music of the Greeks at the time of Amphion and of Orpheus was at the level at which we now find it in the towns farthest away from the Capital; that is when it interrupted the flow of rivers, attracted oaks, and moved rocks. Now that it has reached a very high level of perfection, it is much beloved, its beauties are even understood, but it leaves everything in place. The same was true of the verses of Homer; a Poet born in times which, in comparison with the times that followed, still preserved something of the childhood of the human spirit. Men were enthralled by his verses, whereas nowadays they merely enjoy and appreciate the verses of good poets." There is no denying that the Abbé Terrasson was occasionally philosophic; but he certainly gives no proof of it in this passage.

Chapter Thirteen
Of Melody

[1] Man is modified by his senses, no one doubts it; but because we fail to distinguish between modifications, we confuse their causes; we attribute both too much and too little power to sensations; we do not realize that often they affect us not only as sensations but as signs or images, and that their moral effects also have moral causes. Just as the sentiments which painting arouses in us are not due to colors, the power which music exercises over our souls is not the product of sounds. Beautiful colors nicely modulated give the eye pleasure, but this pleasure is purely sensory. It is the drawing, the imitation that endows these colors with life and soul, it is the passions which they express that succeed in arousing our own, the objects which they represent that [*413*] succeed in affecting us. Interest and sentiment do not depend on colors; the lines of a touching painting touch us in an etching as well; remove them from the Painting, and the colors will cease to have any effect.

[2] Melody does in music exactly what drawing does in painting; it indicates the lines and shapes, of which the chords and sounds are but the colors; but, it will be said, melody is nothing but a succession of sounds; no doubt; but drawing is also nothing but an arrangement of colors. An orator uses ink to set down his writings: does this mean that ink is a most eloquent liquid?

[3] Suppose a country where they had no idea of drawing, but where many people who spent their lives combining, mixing, grading colors, believed that they excelled in painting; these people would argue about our painting exactly as we argue about the music of the Greeks. If they were told about the emotion which beautiful paintings arouse in us and the charm of being moved by a pathetic scene, their scholars would immediately delve into the matter, comparing their colors with ours, seeing whether our green is more delicate or our red more brilliant; they would inquire what combinations of colors can cause weeping, what others arouse anger? The Burettes of that country would patch together a few ragtag scraps of our paintings; whereupon people would ask themselves with some astonishment what is so wonderful about that coloration.

[4] But if in a neighboring nation someone began tracing a line, a sketch, some as yet unfinished figure, it would all be regarded as so much scribbling, as willful and baroque painting, and for the sake of preserving [good] taste they would restrict themselves to that simple beauty which really expresses nothing but causes beautiful modulations, large slabs of strong color, extended transitions between hues, to vibrate without a single line.

[5] Finally they might perhaps by dint of progress get to the experiment with the prism. Straightway some famous artist would be sure to erect a fancy system on the basis of it. Gentlemen, he would say to them, if we are to philosophize properly we must go back to the physical causes. Here you have the resolution of light, the primary colors, their relations, [*414*] their proportions, the true principles of the pleasure you derive from painting. All this mysterious talk about drawing, representation, shape is pure imposture on the part of French painters who think that with their imitations they can arouse I know not what movements in the soul, when it is well known that there are only sensations. You hear wonderful reports about their painting, but look at my hues.

[6] French painters, he would continue, may have noticed the rainbow; nature may have endowed them with some taste for nuance and some instinct for coloration. I, however, have shown you the great, the true principles of the art. What am I saying, of the art? Of all the arts, Gentlemen, of all the Sciences. The analysis of colors, the measurement of prismatic refractions provide you with the only precise relations to be found in nature, with the rule for all relations. Now, everything in the universe is only relations. Hence one knows everything once one knows how to paint, one knows everything once one knows how to match colors.

[7] What would we say about a painter so lacking in sense and taste as to reason this way and stupidly to limit the pleasure painting gives us to the physical aspects of his art? What would we say about a musician who, filled with similar prejudices, believed that harmony alone is the source of the great effects of music? We would send the former off to paint the woodwork, and condemn the other to compose French operas.

[8] As painting is then not the art of combining colors in ways pleasing to the eye, music is also not the art of combining sounds

in ways pleasing to the ear. If this were all there were to them, they would both be natural sciences, not fine arts. Imitation alone raises them to that rank. What makes painting one of the imitative arts? Drawing. What makes music another? Melody.

[*415*]

Chapter Fourteen
Of Harmony

[1] The beauty of sounds is by nature; their effect is entirely physical; it is due to the interaction of the different particles of air set in motion by the sounding body and by all of its constituent parts, [continuing] perhaps to infinity: all of these taken together produce a pleasant sensation: all men in the universe will take pleasure in listening to beautiful sounds; but unless this pleasure is enlivened by familiar melodic inflections it will not be [totally] delightful, it will not become utter pleasure [*volupté*]. The songs which to us are the most beautiful will only moderately affect an ear completely unaccustomed to them; it is a language for which one has to have the Dictionary.

[2] Harmony properly so called is in an even less favorable situation. Since all of its beauties are by convention, it does not in any way appeal to ears untutored in it, to experience and to appreciate it requires long-standing familiarity with it. Rude ears perceive our consonances as mere noise. It is not surprising that when the natural proportions are altered, natural pleasure disappears.

[3] A sound carries with it all of its accompanying overtones, so related [to it] in terms of intensity and intervals as to produce its most perfect harmony. Add to it the third or fifth or some other consonant intervals, and what you have done is not to augment it but to double it; you retain the relation of interval while changing that of intensity: by emphasizing one consonant interval and not the others, you upset the proportion: By trying to do better than nature you do worse. Your ear and your taste are spoiled by a misunderstanding of art. By nature there is no other harmony than unison.

[4] M. Rameau contends that comparatively simple trebles naturally suggest their basses, and that a person with a true but untrained ear will naturally sing this bass. That is a musician's prejudice, [*416*] contradicted by all experience. A person who has never heard either bass or harmony will not only fail to find them on his own, he will even dislike them if he should hear them, and he will very much prefer simple unison.

[5] Even if a thousand years were spent reckoning the relations of sounds and the laws of harmony, how could that art ever be turned into an art of imitation, what would be the principle of this supposed imitation, of what is harmony the sign, and what have chords in common with our passions?

[6] Ask the same question about melody, and the answer is immediately evident, it is in the reader's mind all along. By imitating the inflections of the voice, melody expresses plaints, cries of suffering or of joy, threats, moans; all the vocal signs of the passions fall within its province. It imitates the accents of [various] languages as well as the idiomatic expressions commonly associated in each one of them with given movements of the soul; it not only imitates, it speaks; and its language, though inarticulate, is lively, ardent, passionate, and a hundred times more vigorous than speech itself. This is where musical imitation acquires its force; this is where song acquires its hold on sensitive hearts. In some [musical] systems harmony can contribute to these [effects] by linking the succession of sounds in accordance with a few laws of modulation, by making intonations more accurate and providing the ear with reliable evidence of this accuracy, by reconciling barely perceptible inflections and fixing them to consonant and connected intervals. But by also placing constraints on melody, harmony deprives it of energy and expressiveness, it eliminates the passionate accent in favor of intervals, it restricts to only two modes songs that should have as many modes as there are tones of voice, and it eradicates and destroys a great many sounds or intervals that do not fit into its system; in a word, it separates song and speech to such an extent that these two languages contend, thwart one another, deprive one another of any truth, and cannot be united in the treatment of a passionate subject without appearing absurd. This is why the people always find it ridiculous to have strong, serious passions expressed in song; for they know that in our languages these passions have no musical

inflections at all, and that men of the north no more die singing than do Swans. [*417*]

[7] By itself, harmony is not even adequate to express what would seem to fall entirely within its province: Thunder, murmuring waters, winds, storms are but poorly rendered by simple chords. Do what you may, mere noise says nothing to the mind, objects have to speak in order to make themselves heard, in every imitation some sort of discourse must always complement the voice of nature. A musician who tries to render noise with noise errs; he knows neither the weaknesses nor the strengths of his art; he judges of it without taste or insight; teach him that he must render noise with song, that if he wished to make frogs croak he would have to make them sing; for it is not enough for him merely to imitate, he must do so in a way that both moves and pleases, otherwise his dreary imitation is as nought, and by failing to arouse anyone's interest, it fails to make any impression.

Chapter Fifteen
That our Liveliest Sensations often Act by Way of Moral Impressions

[1] So long as sounds continue to be considered exclusively in terms of the excitation they trigger in our nerves, the true principles of music and of its power over men's hearts will remain elusive. In a melody, sounds act on us not only as sounds but as signs of our affections, of our sentiments; this is how they arouse in us the [e]motions which they express and the image of which we recognize in them. Something of this moral effect can be discerned even in animals. One Dog's barking attracts another. When my cat hears me imitate a miaowing, he is immediately alert, restless, tense. As soon as he notices that it is I, imitating the sounds of a cat, he sits back down and relaxes. What accounts for this difference in

impressions, since there is none in the excitation of the nerve fibers, and the cat itself was initially deceived?

[2] If the major impact our sensations have upon us is not due to moral causes, then why [*418*] are we so sensitive to impressions which are meaningless to barbarians? why is music that most moves us but an empty noise to the ear of a Carib? Are his nerves of a different nature from ours, why are they not excited in the same way, or why do the same excitations affect some people so strongly and others hardly at all?

[3] As proof of the physical power of sounds, people refer to the cure of Tarantula bites. The example proves the very opposite. Those who have been stung by this insect do not, all of them, require absolute sounds or the same tunes as a cure, rather, each one of them requires tunes with a melody he knows and lyrics he can understand. An Italian requires Italian tunes, a Turk would require Turkish tunes. Each is affected only by accents with which he is familiar; his nerves respond to them only insofar as his mind inclines them to it: he has to understand the language in which he is being addressed if he is to be set in motion by what he is told. Bernier's Cantatas are said to have cured a French musician of the fever, they would have given one to a musician of any other nation.

[4] The same differences can be observed in all the other senses down to the crudest of them. Let a man with his hand resting and his glance focusing on one and the same object, alternately believe that it is and that it is not alive, although his senses are struck the same way, what a difference in the impression? The roundness, whiteness, firmness, gentle warmth, springy resistance, rhythmic swelling are pleasant but dull to the touch, once he no longer believes that underneath them he can feel the throbbing and beating of a heart full of life.

[5] I know only one sense the reactions of which are without any moral component: taste. That is why a sweet tooth is the dominant vice only of people who feel nothing.

[6] Whoever wishes to philosophize about the force of sensations must therefore begin by setting the purely sensory impressions apart from the intellectual and moral impressions we receive by way of the senses, but of which the senses are only the occasional causes: let him avoid the error of attributing to sensible objects a power which they either lack or derive from the affections of the soul

which they represent to us. Colors and sounds can do much [419] as representations and signs, and little as simple objects of sensation. Sequences of sounds or of chords may perhaps amuse me for a moment; but in order to delight and to move me, these sequences must provide something that is neither sound nor chord, and will move me in spite of myself. Even songs that are merely pleasant but say nothing also become wearisome; for it is not so much the ear that conveys pleasure to the heart as the heart that conveys it to the ear. I believe that if these ideas had been explored more adequately, much foolish speculation about ancient music could have been avoided. But in this century when every effort is made to materialize all the operations of the soul and to deprive human sentiments of all morality, I should be greatly surprised if the new philosophy did not prove as fatal to good taste as it does to virtue.

Chapter Sixteen
False Analogy between Colors and Sounds

[1] Physical observations have occasioned every kind of absurdity in discussions of the fine arts. The analysis of sound has revealed the same relations as has the analysis of light. Straightway people enthusiastically seized upon this analogy without regard for experience or reason. The systematizing spirit has jumbled everything and, since it proved impossible to paint for the ears, it was decided to sing to the eyes. I have seen the famous clavichord on which music was supposedly produced with colors; what a gross misunderstanding of how nature operates it was not to see that the effect of colors is due to their permanence and that of sounds to their succession.

[2] The full wealth of coloration is spread out all at once over the face of the earth. Everything is seen at first glance; but the more one looks, the more one is enchanted. One need only go on admiring and contemplating forever.

[3] The same is not true of sound: nature does not analyze it and separate out its harmonics; on the contrary, it hides them under the appearance of unison; or if, some[*420*]times, it does separate them in the modulated song of man or in the warbling of certain birds, it does so successively and one after the other; it inspires songs, not chords, it dictates melody, not harmony. Colors are the ornament of inanimate beings; all matter is colored; but sounds proclaim movement, the voice proclaims a being endowed with sense; only animate bodies sing. It is not the mechanical flutist that plays the flute, but the engineer who measured the flow of air and made the fingers move.

[4] Thus every sense has its own proper realm. The realm of music is time, that of painting is space. To multiply the number of sounds heard all at once, or to present colors one after the other, is to alter their economy, it is to substitute the eye for the ear, and the ear for the eye.

[5] You say; just as every color is determined by the angle of refraction of the ray that causes it, so is every sound determined by the number of vibrations of the sounding body in a given span of time. Now, since the relations between these angles and these numbers are the same, the analogy is obvious. Granted; but it is an analogy of reason, not of sensation, and [besides], it is not to the point. In the first place the angle of refraction is both perceptible and measurable whereas the number of vibrations is neither. Sounding bodies, being subject to the influence of the air, constantly change their size and the sounds they give forth. Colors last, sounds vanish, and one can never be certain that the sounds that arise next are the same as those that have just died away. Moreover, every color is absolute, independent, whereas every sound is for us only relative and distinct only by contrast. By itself a sound has no absolute character by which it might be recognized; it is low or high, loud or soft in relation to another sound; in itself it is none of these. Nor is a given sound by nature anything within the harmonic system: it is neither tonic, nor dominant, nor harmonic, nor fundamental; for all of these properties are only relationships, and since the entire system can vary from low to high, every sound changes its rank and position in the system as the system changes in degree. But the properties of colors are not at all functions of relationships. Yellow is yellow independently of red and of [*421*] blue, it is

everywhere perceptible and recognizable, and as soon as its angle of refraction has been determined we can be sure of obtaining the same yellow every time.

[6] Colors are not in the colored bodies but in the light; an object must be illuminated in order to be visible. Sounds also need a moving agent, and in order for them to exist, the sounding body has to be set in motion. Sight here enjoys a further advantage: for the constant emanation [of light] from the stars is the natural agency by which sight is acted upon, whereas nature by itself engenders few sounds and, short of believing in the harmony of the heavenly spheres, living beings are needed to produce it.

[7] Painting is thus seen to be closer to nature, while music is more closely related to human art. Music is also felt to [involve our] interest more than does painting precisely because it brings man closer to man and always gives us some idea about our own kind. Painting is often dead and inanimate, it can transport you to the middle of a desert; but as soon as vocal signs strike your ear, they herald a being like yourself, they are, so to speak, the organs of the soul, and if they also depict solitude they tell you that you are not alone in it. Birds whistle, man alone sings, and it is not possible to hear a song or a symphony without immediately telling oneself: another sentient being is present.

[8] One of the great advantages the musician enjoys is that he can paint things that cannot be heard, whereas the Painter cannot represent things that cannot be seen, and the greatest wonder of an art that acts solely through movement is that it can fashion it even into an image of repose. Sleep, the quiet of night, solitude, and silence itself have a place in the spectacles of music. It is known that noise can produce the effect of silence and silence the effect of noise, as when one falls asleep while being read to in an even and monotonous voice and wakes up the moment it stops. But the effect of music on us is more profound in that it excites in us through one of the senses affects similar to those that can be aroused through another, and since this relation is perceptible only if the impression is strong, painting, which lacks the requisite force, cannot imitate music [*422*] as music imitates it. Though the whole of nature be asleep, he who contemplates it does not sleep, and the musician's art consists in substituting for the imperceptible image of the object that of the [e]motions which this object's presence excites in the heart of the beholder. Not only will it churn up the

sea, fan the flames of a conflagration, cause rivers to run, rain to fall, and streams to swell; but it will also depict the desolation of dreadful deserts, dusk the walls of a subterranean dungeon, appease the storm, clear and still the air and, from the orchestra, spread renewed freshness through the woodlands. It will not represent these things directly, but it will excite in the soul the very same sentiments which one experiences upon seeing them.

Chapter Seventeen
A Musicians' Error that is Harmful to their Art

Note how everything constantly brings us back to the moral effects about which I have spoken, and how far the musicians who account for the impact of sounds solely in terms of the action of air and the excitation of [nerve] fibers are from understanding wherein the force of this art consists. The more closely they assimilate it to purely physical impressions, the farther away they remove it from its origin, and the more they also deprive it of its primitive energy. By abandoning the accents of speech and adhering exclusively to the rules of harmony, music becomes noisier to the ear and less pleasing to the heart. It has already ceased to speak, soon it will no longer sing and then, for all of its chords and harmony, it will no longer have any effect on us.

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Chapter Eighteen
That the Musical System of the Greeks has no Relation whatsoever to Ours

[1] How did these changes come about? By a natural change in the character of languages. It is known that our harmony is a Gothic

invention. People who claim to discover the system of the Greeks in ours talk foolishness. The system of the Greeks was absolutely not harmonic in our sense of the term, except for what was required to tune instruments according to perfect consonances. All peoples with stringed instruments are forced to tune them by consonances, whereas those without them exhibit inflections in their songs which we call false because they do not fit into our system and we have no notations for them. This has been observed in the songs of American savages, and it should also have been observed in the various intervals of Greek music, if it had been studied with less partiality for our own music.

[2] The Greeks divided their Scale into tetrachords as we divide our keyboard into octaves, and the same divisions recurred regularly in each of their tetrachords as they do in each of our octaves; a similarity which would not have been preserved in the unity of the harmonic mode, and would not even have been imagined. But since one proceeds by smaller intervals when speaking than when singing, it was natural for them to view the repetition of tetrachords in their oral melody as we do the repetition of octaves in our harmonic melody.

[3] The only consonances they acknowledged are the consonances we call perfect; they excluded thirds and sixths from this class. Why did they do so? Because they did not know, or at least in practice excluded, the minor interval of the whole tone, and their consonances were not tempered in any degree; as a consequence all their major thirds were too great and their minor thirds [*424*] too small by a comma, and so their major and minor sixths were reciprocally altered in the same way. Now, try to imagine what notions of harmony and what harmonic modes are possible once thirds and sixths are excluded from the class of consonances! If, with a true sense for harmony, they had perceived the consonances which they did allow, then these consonances would at least have been implicit in their songs, and the unsounded consonance of the root sequences would have lent its name to the diatonic sequences it implied. Far from having fewer consonances than we, they would have had more; and, for example, since they understood the bass *do sol*, they would have called the second *do re* a consonance.

[4] But, someone might object, why diatonic sequences? Because of an instinct that inclines us to choose the most convenient inflec-

tions in an accented and singing language: because the voice took a middle course between the extreme glottal modifications that are required in order constantly to sound the large intervals of consonances on the one hand, and the difficulty of controlling intonation in the very complicated relationships of smaller intervals on the other, it naturally hit on intervals smaller than consonances and simpler than commas; which is not to say that smaller intervals did not also serve a function in the more pathetic forms.

Chapter Nineteen
How Music Degenerated

[1] As language became perfected, melody imperceptibly lost some of its former vigor by imposing new rules on itself, and the calculation of intervals replaced delicacy of inflection. This, for example, is how the enharmonic genus gradually fell into disuse. Once theater had assumed a fixed form, all singing in it was restricted to prescribed modes; and as the number of rules for imitation increased, imitative language weakened. [*425*]

[2] The study of philosophy and the progress of reasoning, having perfected grammar, deprived language of the lively and passionate tone that had originally made it so songlike. Composers who at first had been in the pay of Poets and worked only under their direction and as it were at their dictation became independent of them at the time of Menallipides and Philoxenus, and it is about this license that Music complains so bitterly in a comedy by Pherecrates a passage of which Plutarch has preserved for us. Thus melody, as it began to be less closely tied to discourse, imperceptibly assumed a separate existence, and music became increasingly independent of words. This was also the period when the wonders gradually ceased which it had wrought when it was but the accent and the harmony of poetry, and when it endowed poetry with a power over the passions which speech has since exercised only over the reason. Indeed, once Greece abounded in Sophists and Philosophers it no longer had famous poets or musicians. In cultivating

the art of convincing [men], the art of moving [them] was lost. Even Plato, jealous of Homer and Euripides, decried the one and was incapable of imitating the other.

[3] Soon servitude added its influence to that of philosophy. Greece in chains lost the fire that warms only free souls, and she never recovered for the praise of her tyrants the tone in which she had sung her Heroes. The influx of Romans further diluted what harmony and accent the language had kept. Latin, a more muted and less musical tongue, harmed music when it adopted it. The way people sang in the capital came little by little to affect the singing in the provinces; the theaters of Rome had a harmful effect on those of Athens; by the time Nero was carrying off prizes Greece had ceased to deserve them; and the same melody shared by two languages suited each of them less well.

[4] Finally the catastrophe occurred which destroyed the progress of the human spirit, without eliminating the vices that were its product. Europe, overrun by barbarians and subjugated by ignorant men, at one and the same time lost her sciences, her arts, and the universal instrument of both, to wit a harmonious and perfected language. These crude men whom the North had fathered gradually accustomed all ears to the coarseness of their [vocal] organ; their harsh and accent-less voice was noisy without being sonorous. [*426*] The Emperor Julian compared the speech of the Gauls to the croaking of frogs. Since all of their articulations were as grating as their voices were nasal and dull, they could impart only one kind of brilliance to their singing, which was to stress the vowel sounds in order to cover up the profusion and the harshness of the consonants.

[5] This noisy singing, combined with the inflexibility of their [vocal] organ, compelled these newcomers as well as the subject peoples who imitated them to make all sounds more sustained in order to make them intelligible. Labored articulation and stressed sounds contributed equally to rob melody of all sense of measure and rhythm; Since the hardest thing to pronounce was always the transition from one sound to the next, the best they could do was to pause at each sound as long as possible, increase its volume, and let it burst forth as vehemently as possible. Soon song was nothing but a dreary and slow succession of drawled and shouted sounds, devoid alike of sweetness, measure, and grace; and although some scholars have maintained that in Latin singing the distinction

between long and short syllables had to be observed, it is in any event certain that verse was sung like prose, and that not feet, nor rhythm, nor any kind of measured song were of any further concern.

[6] Song thus deprived of all melody and consisting solely in the volume and duration of sounds must finally have suggested ways in which it might be made still more resonant with the aid of consonances. Several voices constantly drawing out in unison endlessly long sounds chanced upon a few chords which made the noise seem pleasant to them by accentuating it, and this is how the use of descant and of counterpoint began.

[7] I do not know how many centuries musicians kept going in circles around vain questions which they dehated because they did not know the principle of an effect which they knew [perfectly well]. Even the most tireless reader could not stand eight to ten long chapters of verbiage in Jean de Muris for the sake of finding out whether it is the fifth or the fourth which should be the lower interval in an octave divided into two consonances; and four hundred years later, equally dreary lists of all the basses that must carry a sixth instead of a fifth are still to be found in Bontempi. In the meantime harmony imperceptibly took the direction prescribed to it by analysis, until finally the invention of the minor mode and of disso[*427*]nances introduced into it the arbitrariness in which it abounds, and which only prejudice prevents us from perceiving.*

* By reducing the whole of harmony to the very simple principle of the resonance of strings in their aliquot [or constituent] parts, M. Rameau bases the minor mode and the dissonance on his supposed findings that a vibrating sonorous string induces vibrations in longer strings at the lower twelfth and the lower major seventeenth. According to him these strings vibrate and quiver over their entire length, but do not resonate. That strikes me as rather odd physics; it is as if one were to say that the sun is shining but it is impossible to see anything.

Since these longer strings produce only the sound of the highest note because they are divided, vibrate, and resonate in unison with it, they blend their sound with its sounds, and thus seem not to emit any sound of their own. The error consists in believing that they were seen to vibrate over their entire length, and in not having observed the nodes carefully. We know from experience, and M. Tartini has confirmed it, that two strings which form any given harmonic interval can make their fundamental heard in the bass even without a third string: but a single string has no other fundamental than its own; it produces no resonance or vibration in its multiples, but only in its unison and its aliquot [or constituent] parts. Since sound has no other cause than the vibration of the sounding body, and since the effect always follows the unimpeded action of the cause, it is nonsense to separate vibrations from resonance.

[8] Once melody was forgotten and the attention of musicians had focused entirely on harmony, everything gradually turned toward this new object; form, mode, scale, everything acquired a new complexion; harmonic successions came to determine the sequence of parts. Once this sequence had usurped the name of melody it indeed became impossible to fail to recognize its mother's features in this new melody, and as our musical system thus gradually became purely harmonic, it is not surprising that spoken accent should have suffered as a result, and that for us music should have lost almost all of its energy.

[9] This is how singing gradually became an art entirely separate from speech from which it originates, how the harmonic aspects of sounds caused the inflections of the voice to be forgotten, and how finally music, restricted to the exclusively physical effect of the combinations of vibrations, came to be deprived of the moral effects it used to produce when it was doubly the voice of nature.

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Chapter Twenty
The Relation of Languages to Governments

[1] These progresses are neither accidental nor arbitrary, they are due to the vicissitudes of things. Languages are naturally formed according to men's needs; they change and deteriorate as these same needs change. In ancient times when persuasion occupied the place of public force eloquence was necessary. Of what use would it be today, when public force replaces persuasion? It takes neither art nor figures of speech to say *such is my pleasure*. What speeches then remain to be addressed to the people assembled? Sermons. And why should those who deliver them care whether they persuade the people, since it does not award privileges? Popular languages have become as thoroughly useless to us as has eloquence. Societies have assumed their final forms; nothing can be changed in them any more except by arms and cash, and since there is nothing left to say to the people but, *give money*, it is said with posters on street

corners or with soldiers in private homes; for this there is no need to assemble anyone: on the contrary, subjects must be kept scattered; this is the first maxim of modern politics.

[2] Some languages are conducive to freedom; they are the sonorous, rhythmic, harmonious languages in which speech can be made out from quite far. Ours are made for the buzz in the Sultan's Council Chamber. Our preachers agonize, work themselves into a sweat in their churches, without anyone's having any idea of what they have said. After they have worn themselves out shouting for an hour, they leave the pulpit half-dead. Surely it was not worth the effort.

[3] Among the ancients it was easy to be heard by the people in a public square; one could speak in one for an entire day without strain. Generals harangued their troops; they could be heard and they did not wear themselves out. Modern historians who have tried to include harangues in their histories have made themselves a laughingstock. [*429*] Imagine someone delivering a harangue in French to the people of Paris in the Place Vendôme. Let him shout at the top of his voice, people will hear that he is shouting, but they will not make out a single word. Herodotus read his history to the people of Greece assembled out of doors and there was applause on all sides. Nowadays an academician who reads a paper at a public session can hardly be heard at the back of the hall. The reason there are fewer mountebanks in the marketplaces of France than of Italy is not that in France people listen to them less, but only that they cannot hear them as well. M. d'Alembert believes that a French recitative could be delivered in the Italian manner; it would have to be spoken directly into the ear, or it wonld simply not be heard. Now, I maintain that any language in which it is not possible to make oneself understood by the people assembled is a servile language; it is impossible for a people to remain free and speak that language.

[4] I shall conclude these reflections which, though superficial, may give rise to more profound ones, with the passage that suggested them to me.

[5] *To note and to show by means of examples the extent to which a people's character, morals, and interests influence its Language would provide matter for a rather philosophical inquiry.**

* *Remarques sur la gram*[*maire*] *génér*[*ale*] *et raison*[*née*], by M. Duclos, p. 11.

[*OC* II, *1242*]

Idea of the Method in the Composition of a Book

[1] When one undertakes to write a work, one has already found the subject and at least part of the material, so that it is only a question of developing and organizing it in the way best suited to convince and to please. This part, which also includes style, is usually the part that determines the success of the work and the reputation of the Author; it is the part that makes not quite for whether a Book is good or bad, but for whether it is well or badly crafted.

[2] It is difficult to form a good working plan unless one has an exact Mind and a perfect knowledge of one's material. On the other hand, with these two qualities it is difficult to make a bad one, provided one devotes to it all the attention which it requires. With the first, one takes all the parts of one's subject into account, with the other one places them in the order that shows them to best advantage and is best suited to set them off and to support one another.

[3] One can, unquestionably, form a great many different projects each one of which is good in relation to its particular object: without entering into this in inexhaustible detail, here is more or less the general order I would wish to follow in constructing a work involving argument: I choose this genre as my example because it is the one that requires the most method and proportion in its parts.

[4] I would first of all begin by clearly explaining the subject I set myself, carefully defining the new or equivocal ideas and words I would need to use, not successively in the form of a dictionary as mathematicians do, but [*1243*] as if prompted by the occasion and deftly inserting my definitions into the presentation of my subject. When one sets out to do a Book, one's intention is to instruct the public about something it did not know, and this is done either by teaching it new truths, or by disabusing it of some false opinions it held; in such a case an author's duty is first of all to explain the common sentiment, to show on what foundations it rests, and with what arms it is defended; when this is done well, it invariably disposes the reader in your favor, he right away sees both an educated person who does not adopt an opinion because he is ignorant of

the arguments in support of the opposite party, and an upright and sincere person who does not try to misrepresent his adversary's arguments to the reader by devious devices.

[5] In setting out, I would present what I wish to prove in such a light as to appear to grant to the opposing sentiment much more than I would really grant it, leaving it to the force of my reasons subsequently to reclaim what I will initially have conceded above and beyond what I needed to concede. This deftness is again very effective in winning the Reader's esteem. It would seem that, because of an overabundance of proofs, an Author finds himself compelled to retract the concessions which his natural moderation had led him to make.

[6] In examining a question, one usually has different kinds of proofs; first one destroys the opposite sentiment, then one establishes one's own. In both cases one draws one's arguments either from within the thing itself, or from its relations with other objects. The choice of these proofs, how they are organized and the light in which they are shown is what, above all, marks out the judicious Writer and the skillful Dialectician. A subtle analogy runs through most of the propositions one can make about one and the same subject, a hidden connection which escapes the vulgar Mind but which true genius always grasps. Once one has a hold of one end of this chain, one finds one's way with marvelous ease and is utterly astonished that an infinite number of roads that seemed to have nothing in common, or that seemed to crisscross one another in a thousand ways, yet successively lead you by the surest and shortest way to the goal [*1244*] you had set yourself. The books of Philosophers are full of Laws and maxims about this matter which pertain to two general methods. One, which they call synthesis or method of composition, by which one proceeds from the simple to the composite and which is used to teach others what one oneself knows; the other, which they call Analysis or method of resolution, and which one uses to learn what one does not know; for example, when one inquires into the genealogy of a house, one traces backward, relative by relative and ancestor by ancestor to the origin of the house, that is the Analytic way. Then one draws up a table at the head of which one places the first of the line, from whom one descends generation by generation down to the current one; that is synthesis. These methods involve quite a number and range of rules

which a capacious and exact Mind follows without giving it a thought. The same holds for Books as for Plays: one cannot begin them too simply, but up to the last moment, one constantly has to keep rising; not by an elevation of style, for the style ought always to be uniform; but by an increase in plenitude of matter and force of argument. After a lively and spirited text, the reader is overcome by disgust and boredom at the least slackening of pace; one has all the trouble in the world pulling him out of this lethargy, and in this indolence he often ignores an infinite number of good things before he recaptures the attentiveness and the interest they should have aroused in him. I would therefore wish always to begin my discussions by the weakest set of proofs. In some matters the most convincing arguments are drawn from within the subject itself; such are questions of Physics. Knowledge of the nature of plants may, for example, well be helped by knowledge of the soil that produces them, the fluids that provide their nourishment, and their specific properties; but their mechanism and springs will never be well known unless one examines them in themselves, unless one considers their entire internal structure, the fibers, valvules, tracheae, bark, pith, leaves, flowers, fruit, roots, and in a word, all the parts that go into making them up. In moral inquiries, by contrast, I would begin by examining the little we know *[1245]* about the human mind taken in itself and considered individually, I would hesitantly derive from this some few obscure and tentative bits of knowledge, but soon abandoning this dark maze, I would hasten to examine man in terms of his relations, and from this examination I would derive a host of luminous truths that would soon dispel the uncertainty of my initial arguments, while they themselves are only made clearer by contrast.

[7] Art consists not only in choosing one's proofs well and disposing them in a fair order: but also in placing them in a suitable light. The force of some simple and solid arguments consists in their very simplicity, and the least embellishment would weaken them; others, more complex, weaker or less self-evident, require the help of images and comparisons: some achieve an air of exactness and liveliness only by dint of flowers and figures [of speech]. Everywhere art has to be at work, but wherever it is most needed, it must take special lengths to hide. If the reader notices it, it is a warning to him to be wary. One also has to weigh how much one's proofs are

worth, so as to present them with no more than the degree of confidence appropriate to them. Introduce first those you rely on least, by all means: but they might be so weak that it would be dangerous to begin with them, unless one gives them a twist which announces that they are there only to precede and prepare more solid arguments.

[8] The final part of a Work may be used to resolve objections and to give examples: but there are mistakes that have to be avoided in either case.

[9] As regards objections, one ought to urge them against oneself in good faith and to make as solid a case for them as possible; most Authors pursue the worst policy in the world in this respect: They grant forces to their adversaries only in proportion to the forces they feel that they themselves have; they gauge objections in terms of their responses to them, and believe they have accomplished wonders when they have overthrown these weak obstacles. But before long they have to deal with people who are not this solicitous of them, and such disputes often end up convicting an author of ignorance and bad faith. This is avoided by [*1246*] proceeding forthrightly: When one makes one's adversaries speak one has to attribute to them as much thoughtfulness as one may have oneself, put oneself in their place, assume their opinion, tackle oneself unsparingly; if the solutions prove to be worth less than the difficulties, it would still leave a better impression than the tricks of a Writer of little sincerity who misleads and seeks to impress.

[10] In giving examples, one has to know what one is doing, giving examples simply for the sake of doing so is a Pedant's occupation: I find it laughable when in so many books and in almost all conversations I find a few particular facts adduced in proof of general propositions. That is a Schoolboy's sophism to which a judicious writer may not stoop. What! Because two or three madmen daily kill themselves in London, the English do not fear death? In that case one would daily have to allow I know not how many contradictory propositions regarding one and the same subject.

[11] In giving examples, one has to weigh; otherwise it is wasted erudition. Let us suppose I want to prove that in general women's merit is as great as men's or greater. If I refered to Semiramis someone would refer to Alexander in rejoinder, to Judith someone

would counter with Scaevola, to Lucretia with Cato Utican, with Anacreon to Sappho, and from one example to the next the list of great men would in this way soon have exceeded that of women. But if one established a proportion between the number of persons on each side who have governed States, led Armies, cultivated Letters, and the number who have been outstanding in these different Capacities, then it is obvious that the side with the greater relative quantity would really deserve primacy.

[12] When I said that objections and examples could be relegated to the last part, I did not mean to make a universal rule of this practice. On the contrary, it is a practice I would wish to follow only in the sorts of matters whose thread one cannot break without disorienting the reader and distracting him from the principal object. If your subject involves this variety you will do well to cast all this into the very body of the work and to exhaust under each heading the matters that bear on it and that you intend to use. But it is dange[*1247*]rous to make a Book cold and long by this method. A prudent Writer combines everything and settles on the form of his work only after having weighed the advantages and the disadvantages on each side.

[13] The final portion of a work may also be used to draw comparisons: especially if it is a matter of subtituting some hypotheses or systems for others, and there is no question of the authors' seeking to show the old system in an unfavorable perspective in order to let their own shine brightly. I do not dwell on this, I would only be saying things everyone knows.

[14] Above all one must know how to end. Nowadays it is fashionable to find all Books excessively long; I find a number of them excessively short, but it is their ending that always seems to me drawn out. Ancient Dramatists often weaken their dénouements in slavish subjection to I know not what bad rules they had imposed upon themselves. Remove the last two or three scenes from most of Terence's plays, their climax would be much livelier and their ending more pleasing. The same holds for a number of modern books. Peroration is a Rhetorician's device; if you have said what needed saying and as it needed to be said in the body of the work, the reader will be perfectly capable of drawing the conclusion.

[*OC* II, *1262*]

Discourse on this Question:

What is the Virtue a Hero Most Needs and Who are the Heroes who have Lacked this Virtue?

Proposed in 1751 by the Academy of Corsica

Notice

[1] This Piece is very bad, and I was so sensitive to its being bad after I wrote it that I did not even think it worth submitting. It is easy to do less badly on this subject, but not to do well; for frivolous questions do not admit of a good answer. That is at least one useful lesson to derive from a bad [piece of] writing.

[2] If I were not *Alexander*, said that Conqueror, I would want to be *Diogenes*. Would the Philosopher have said: If I were not what I am, I would want to be *Alexander*? I doubt it; A Conqueror would sooner consent to be a Wise Man than a Wise Man to be a Conqueror. But who in the world, except a Wise Man, would not agree to be Hero? One does, then, sense that Heroism has its own virtues, which do not depend on fortune, but need it in order to develop. The Hero is the work of nature, fortune, and himself. In order to define him well, one would have specify what he owes to each of the three.

[3] The Wise Man possesses all the virtues. The Hero [*1263*] makes up for the virtues he lacks by the splendor of those he possesses. The virtues of the first are tempered, but he is free of vices; if the second has flaws, they are eclipsed by the splendor of his virtues. The one, ever true, has no bad qualities; the other, ever great, has none that are mediocre. Both are firm and unshakable, but in different ways and about different things; the one never yields except by reason; the other never yields except out of generosity; weaknesses are as unknown to the Wise Man as cowardices

are to the Hero, and violence holds no more sway in the soul of the one than the passions do in the other's.

[4] There is, then, greater solidity in the Wise Man's character, and greater splendor in the Hero's; and the choice would be settled in favor of the first, if one left it at thus considering them in themselves. But if we consider them in their relation to the interest of Society, new reflections will soon produce different judgments and restore the Heroic qualities to the preeminence that is due them, and that, by common consent, has been granted them in all centuries.

[5] Indeed, attending to his own felicity is the Wise Man's sole care, and that is surely quite enough to constitute an ordinary man's full task. The true Hero's views reach farther; his object is the happiness of men, and it is to this sublime labor that he devotes the great soul he has received from Heaven. The Philosophers do, I admit, claim to teach men the art of being happy and, as if they could expect to form nations of Wise Men, they preach to Peoples a chimerical felicity which they themselves do not possess, and the idea and taste for which Peoples never acquire. *Socrates* saw and deplored the misfortunes of his fatherland; but it remained for *Thrasybulus* to end them; and *Plato*, after wasting his eloquence, his honor and his time at a Tyrant's court, was compelled to relinquish to another the glory of delivering Syracuse from the yoke of tyranny. The Philosopher may give the Universe some salutary instructions; but his lessons will not ever correct either the Great who despise them, or the People which does not understand them. This is not the way men are governed[,] by abstract views; they are only made happy by being constrained to be so, and they have to be made to experience happiness in order [*1264*] to be made to love it: this is [the object of] the Hero's care and talents; often it is with force in hand that he puts himself in the position of receiving the Blessings of men whom he begins by compelling to bear the yoke of the laws so that he might eventually subject them to the authority of reason.

[6] Heroism is then the one of all the properties of the soul of which it most matters to Peoples that those who govern them be possessed. It is the combination of a great number of sublime virtues, rare in their association, rarer in their energy, and all the rarer still because the Heroism which [together] they make up, free of

all personal interest, has people's felicity as its sole object, and their admiration as its sole reward.

[7] I have said nothing here of the legitimate glory owed to great deeds; I have not spoken of the force of genius or of the other personal qualities Heroes need, and which, without being virtues, often contribute more than do virtues to the success of great enterprises. In assigning his rank to the true Hero, I have relied solely on this unchallengeable principle: that among men he who makes himself most useful to others should be the foremost. I have no fear that the Wise will appeal a decision based on this maxim.

[8] It is true, I hasten to admit it, that this way of viewing Heroism gives rise to an objection that seems all the more difficult to resolve as it is derived from the very heart of the matter.

[9] There is no need of two Suns in nature, the Ancients used to say, nor of two *Caesars* on earth. Indeed, Heroism is like those sought-after metals that are valuable for being rare, and would become harmful or useless if they were abundant. The man whose valor pacified the World would have laid it waste if he had found in it a single rival worthy of him. Under certain circumstances a Hero may be needed to save mankind; a people of Heroes would inevitably be its ruin under any circumstances, and, like the Soldiers of *Cadmus*, it would soon destroy itself.

[10] Go on, I will be told, can multiplying mankind's benefactors be a danger to men, and can there be too many people working for the happiness of all? Yes, indeed, I shall answer, when they go about it badly, or only appear to attend to it. [*1265*] Let us not hide anything from ourselves; the public felicity is far less the end of the Hero's deeds than it is a means to the end he seeks, and this end is almost always his personal glory. Love of glory has made for innumerable goods and evils; love of Fatherland is purer in its principle and surer in its effects; and indeed, the World has often had a surfeit of Heroes; but the nations will never have enough citizens. There is a considerable difference between the man who is virtuous and the one who has virtues; the source of the Hero's virtues is rarely purity of soul and, like those beneficial but comparatively inert drugs that have to be activated by acrid and corrosive salts, they would seem to need the assistance of some vice to animate them.

[11] One should therefore conceive of Heroism not in terms of an idea of moral perfection which in no way corresponds to it, but as

a composite of good and bad qualities that are beneficial or harmful depending on circumstances, and combined in a proportion such as often to result in greater fortune and glory for him who possesses them, and sometimes even in more happiness for the Peoples, than could a more perfect virtue.

[12] From these notions properly developed it follows that quite a few virtues may be at odds with Heroism; that others are indifferent with respect to it; that others are more or less favorable to it, according to their different relations to the great art of subduing the hearts and arousing the admiration of Peoples; and finally that among these latter there has to be one that is more necessary, more essential, more indispensable to it, and that in some way characterizes it: it is this special and properly Heroic virtue that should here be the object of my inquiries.

[13] Nothing is as categorical as ignorance, and doubt is as rare among the People as assertion is among true Philosophers. Vulgar prejudice long ago decided the question we are discussing today, and most men have long taken valor in war to be the Hero's foremost virtue. Let us dare to appeal this blind judgment to the Court of reason, and may prejudices, so often the enemies and conquerors of reason, learn to yield to it in turn.

[14] Let us not reject the first reflection which this subject occasions, and let us begin by conceding that Peoples have [*1266*] rather thoughtlessly bestowed their esteem and adulation on martial prowess, or that with a rather odious inconsistency they believe that it is by destroying men that the benefactors of mankind manifest their character. We are pretty inept as well as pretty wretched, if our admiration can only be aroused by causing us distress. Are we to believe, then, that if ever the days of happiness and peace were to be reborn among us, they would banish from our midst both Heroism and the frightful train of public calamities, and that Heroes would be relegated to the Temple of *Janus*, as, after a war, antiquated and useless weapons are stored away in our Arsenals.

[15] I know that courage counts for something among the qualities that ought to form a great man; but outside combat, valor is nothing. The courageous man proves himself only on days of battle; the true Hero proves himself every day, and his virtues, even if they are sometimes displayed with pomp, are no less often useful under a more modest exterior.

[16] Let us dare say it. Valor is so far from being the Hero's foremost virtue, that it is even doubtful it should be reckoned among the virtues. How can one honor with that title a quality upon which so many scoundrels have founded their crimes? No, never would the *Catilines* or *Cromwells* have made their name famous; never would the one have attempted to ruin his Fatherland, nor the other have enslaved his, if the most unshakable fearlessness had not been the deepest stratum of their character. With more virtues, you will say, they would have been Heroes; say rather that with fewer crimes they would have been men.

[17] I shall not here pass in review those fatal warriors, the dread and scourge of mankind, those men greedy for blood and conquests, whose names cannot be uttered without trembling, the *Mariuses*, the *Totilas*, the *Tamerlanes*. I shall not take advantage of the just horror they have inspired in the nations. And what need is there to resort to monsters in order to show that even the most generous bravery is more suspect in its principle, more variable in its examples, more fatal in its effects than accords with the steadfastness, the solidity and the benefits of virtue. How many memorable deeds have not been inspi[*1267*]red by shame or vanity? How many feats performed in the light of the Sun, under the chiefs' gaze and in front of an entire army, have not been belied in the silence and darkness of night? This one is courageous among his companions, who would be but a coward, abandoned to himself; this one has a General's countenance who never had a Soldier's heart; this one faces death and his enemy's sword in a breach, who in the privacy of his house cannot bear the sight of a Surgeon's salutary scalpel.

[18] This particular man was brave on this particular day, the Spaniards of *Charles V*'s time used to say, and those people knew something about bravery. Indeed, perhaps nothing is as variable as valor, and very few honest warriors would dare answer for themselves for even twenty-four hours. *Ajax* terrifies *Hector*; *Hector* terrifies *Ajax* and flees from *Achilles*. *Antiochus the Great* was brave half his life, and cowardly the other half. The conqueror of the three parts of the World lost his heart and head at Pharsala. *Caesar* himself was moved at Dyrrhachium, and afraid at Munda. The victor over *Brutus* cowardly fled from *Octavius* and relinquished the victory and the empire of the World to him who owed him the one

as well as the other. Is it likely that it is for want of modern examples that I have cited only ancient ones here?

[19] Let it, therefore, no longer be said that the palm of Heroism belongs only to valor and the military talents. It is not by their exploits that the reputation of great men is measured. The vanquished have carried off the reward of glory a hundred times more often than have the victors. Take a vote and tell me which of the two is greater, *Alexander* or *Porus*, *Pyrrhus* or *Fabricius*, *Antony* or *Brutus*; *Francis I* in chains or *Charles V* triumphant, *Valois* victorious or *Coligny* vanquished?

[20] What are we to say about the great men who are all the more surely immortal for not having soiled their hands with blood? What are we to say about the Lawgiver of Sparta who, after tasting the pleasure of ruling, had the courage to return the crown to its legitimate possessor who was not asking him for it; about the gentle and peaceful Citizen who was able to avenge the injuries done him not by the offender's death, but by turning him into an honest man? Are we to reject the oracle that granted him almost [*1268*] divine honors, and deny Heroism to the man who made Heroes of all his compatriots? What are we to say about the Lawgiver of Athens who was able to keep his freedom and virtue at the very Court of tyrants, and dared maintain to the face of an opulent Monarch that power and riches do not make a man happy? What are we to say of the greatest of Romans and the most virtuous of men, about this model among citizens to whom alone the oppressor of the Fatherland did the honor to hate him enough to take up the pen against him, even after his death? Shall we so affront Heroism as to deny it to *Cato Uticensis*? And yet this man did not distinguish himself in battles and did not fill the world with the clamor of his exploits. I am mistaken: he did perform one, the most difficult one ever undertaken, and the only one that will never be imitated, when of a body of warriors he formed a society of wise, equitable and moderate men.

[21] It is well enough known that valor was not *Augustus*'s lot. He did not gather the laurels that made him immortal off the coast of Actium or on the plains of Philippi, but in Rome pacified and made happy. A subdued Universe did less for the glory and security of his life than did the equity of his laws and the pardon of *Cinna*: that is how much preferable the social virtues are even in Heroes!

The greatest Captain in the world dies assassinated in the middle of the Senate for a bit of injudicious haughtiness, for having wished to add a vain title to real power; and the odious author of the proscriptions, eradicating his crimes by dint of justice and clemency, became the father of his Fatherland which he had devastated, and dies adored by the Romans he had enslaved.

[22] Who among us will dare deprive all these great men of the Hero's crown adorning their immortal heads? Who will dare refuse it to the Philosophic and beneficent warrior who with a hand accustomed to handling arms deflects from your breast the calamities of a long and deadly war, and makes the sciences and the fine arts shine among you with Royal magnificence? O Spectacle worthy of the Heroic times! I see the Muses in all their splendor march in your battalions with confident stride, Apollo and Mars crown each other, and your Island still smoldering from the ravages of the lightning henceforth defy its bolts sheltered by these [*1269*] double laurels. Judge, then, illustrious Citizens, who deserves the palm of Heroism more, the Warriors who rushed to your defense, or the Wise Men who do everything for your happiness; or rather, spare yourselves an unnecessary choice, for by this double criterion you will only have the same brows to crown.

[23] To the examples which come crowding in and which it is impossible to exhaust let us add a few reflections that confirm the inferences I wish to draw from them here. To assign to valor the foremost rank in the Heroic character would be to give precedence to the arm that executes over the head that plans. Yet arms are more readily available than heads. One can entrust the execution of a great plan to others without losing the principal merit for it; but to execute another's plan is voluntarily to resume the subordinate rank, and that is not the Hero's part.

[24] Thus, whatever may be the virtue that characterizes him, it must signal genius and be inseparable from it. While the seed of the Heroic qualities does, indeed, come from the heart, it is in the head that they develop and assume solidity. The purest soul can stray even on the road to good, if mind and reason do not guide it, and without the assistance of wisdom, all the virtues get corrupted. Firmness readily degenerates into stubbornness, gentleness into weakness, zeal into fanaticism, valor into ferocity. Often a great enterprise poorly planned does more harm to the one who bungles

it than a deserved success would have brought him honor; for contempt is commonly stronger than esteem. It would even seem that, in establishing a resplendent reputation, talents make up for virtues much more readily than virtues do for talents. The Soldier of the North, with narrow genius and limitless courage had, by the middle of his career, irretrievably lost a glory acquired by prodigious feats of valor and generosity; and public opinion is still in doubt about whether the murderer of *Charles Stuart* is not, for all of his crimes, one of the greatest men ever to have existed.

[25] Bravery does not constitute a character but, on the contrary, it derives its particular form from the character of the person who possesses it. It is a virtue in a virtuous soul and a vice in a wicked man. The knight *Bayard* was brave; so was *Cartouche*: but is anyone likely to believe [*1270*] that they were so the same way? Valor admits of all forms; it is generous or brutal, stupid or enlightened, raging or tranquil, depending on the soul that possesses it; depending on circumstances, it is the sword of vice or the shield of virtue; and since it does not necessarily signal either greatness of soul or of mind, it is not the virtue a Hero most needs. Pardon me for it, valiant and unfortunate People that has for so long filled Europe with the clamor of your exploits and your miseries. No, it is not to the bravery of those of your Fellow-Citizens who spilled their blood for their country that I shall award the Hero's Crown, but to their ardent love of Fatherland and to their invincible steadfastness in the face of adversity. For being Heroes with such sentiments, they could even have dispensed with being brave.

[26] I have attacked a dangerous and too widely held opinion; I have not the same reasons for following the method of exclusions in all of its details. All the virtues arise from the different relations Society has established between men. Now the number of these relations is almost infinite. What a task would it therefore be to set out to review them? It would be immense, since there are among men as many possible virtues as there are real vices; it would be superfluous, since, among the number of great and difficult virtues the Hero needs in order to command well, one cannot include as necessary the large number of even more difficult virtues the multitude needs in order to obey. Someone shone brilliantly in the first rank who, if he had been born in the last, would have died obscure and unnoticed. I do not know what would have happened to *Epic-*

tetus, if he had been placed upon the throne of the world; but I do know that in *Epictetus*'s place, *Caesar* himself would never have been anything but a paltry slave.

[27] For the sake of brevity, let us therefore restrict ourselves to the divisions established by the Philosophers, and leave it at reviewing the four principal virtues to which they relate all the others, quite confident that one should not look for the basis of Heroism in ancillary, obscure and subordinate qualities.

[28] But are we to say that justice is this basis, when the majority of great men have founded the monument to their glory on injustice? Some, drunk [*1271*] with the love of Fatherland, have found nothing to be illegitimate in its service and have not hesitated to use on its behalf odious means which their generous souls could never have resolved to use on their own behalf; others, consumed by ambition, labored solely to put their country in chains; a fierce desire for vengeance has led others to betray it. Some have been rapacious conquerors, others skillful usurpers, still others were not even ashamed to become the Ministers of someone else's tyranny. Some have scorned their duty, others have made light of their faith. A few have been unjust out of [adherence to] some system, others out of weakness, most out of ambition: all attained immortality.

[29] Justice is then not the virtue that characterizes the Hero. It seems no more accurate to say that it is temperance or moderation since it is for want of this latter virtue that the most famous men made themselves immortal, and the vice that is the opposite of the former virtue has not kept a single one of them from becoming immortal; not even *Alexander*, whom this frightful vice covered with his friend's blood; not even *Caesar*, whom all of his profligacies during his life did not deprive of a single altar after his death.

[30] Prudence is a quality of the mind rather than a virtue of the soul. But, regardless of how one looks on it, one always finds it more solid than splendid, and it tends rather to enhance the other virtues than to shine on its own. Prudence, says Montaigne, so tender and circumspect, is the mortal enemy of lofty enterprises and of any genuinely heroic deed: while it prevents great mistakes, it also hinders great undertakings; for there are but few great undertakings that do not in the end require leaving far more to chance than it is appropriate for a wise man to leave to it. Besides, the character of Heroism consists in raising to the highest pitch the

virtues that are properly its own. Yet nothing comes so close to pusillanimity as excessive prudence, and one scarcely rises above man without sometimes trampling human reason underfoot. Prudence is then still not the characteristic virtue of the Hero.

[31] Temperance is still less so, [as it is the virtue] which Heroism itself, which is nothing but an intemperance of glory, appears formally to exclude. Where are the Heroes who have not been degraded by excesses of some kind? Alexander, it is said, was [*1272*] chaste; but was he sober? Did not this rival of India's first conqueror imitate his profligacies? did he not combine them, when at the prompting of a Courtesan he burned down the Palace at Persepolis? O, had he but had a Mistress! He would not have killed his friend during his fatal debauchery. Caesar was sober, but was he chaste, he who exposed Rome to unheard of prostitution and changed sex at pleasure? Alcibiades had every sort of intemperance and was nonetheless one of the great men of Greece. Even the elder Cato himself loved money and wine. He had abject vices and was the object of the Romans' admiration. And that People knew about glory.

[32] The virtuous man is just, prudent, moderate, without being a Hero for all that, and all too frequently the Hero is none of all that. Let us not hesitate to concede it; often Heroism has owed its splendor to its very contempt for these virtues. What becomes of *Caesar*, *Alexander*, *Pyrrhus*, *Hannibal*, viewed in this light? With somewhat fewer vices they might well have been less famous; for glory is the reward of Heroism; whereas virtue requires a different reward.

[33] If the virtues had to be distributed to those they suit best, I would assign prudence to the Statesman; justice to the Citizen; moderation to the Philosopher; as for strength of soul or fortitude, I would give it to the Hero, and he would have no cause to complain of his share.

[34] Indeed, fortitude is the true foundation of Heroism; it is the source or the supplement of the virtues that compose it, and it is what renders it fit for great things. Combine any way you please the qualities that can contribute to forming a great man, if you do not add fortitude to enliven them, they all grow listless and Heroism vanishes. By contrast, force of soul or fortitude alone necessarily

bestows a great many Heroic virtues to anyone endowed with it, and it makes up for all the others.

[35] Just as one can perform virtuous deeds without being virtuous, so one can perform great deeds without having a right to Heroism. The Hero is not forever performing great deeds; but he is ever ready to perform them in case of need and he shows himself great in all the circumstances of his life: that is what distinguishes him from the vulgar. An invalid may take up a spade and work the ground a few [*1273*] moments: but he is soon worn out and exhausted. A robust husbandman cannot stand great labors without respite, but he could stand them without straining, and he owes this power to his bodily force. Strength of soul or fortitude is the same thing; it consists in being able always to act forcefully.

[36] Men are more blind than wicked; and there is more weakness than malice in their vices. We deceive ourselves before deceiving others, and our faults are solely due to our errors; we almost only commit any because we allow ourselves to get caught up by petty present interests which make us forget more important and more remote things. Hence all the pettinesses that characterize the vulgar, inconstancy, frivolity, capriciousness, knavery, fanaticism, cruelty: all of them vices which have weakness of soul as their source. To the contrary, everything is great and generous in a strong or forceful soul, because it is capable of discriminating between the fine and the specious, reality and appearance, and of fastening on its object with the firmness that dispels illusions and overcomes the greatest obstacles.

[37] Thus an unstable judgment and an easily seduced heart render men weak and petty. To be great one need only assume mastery of oneself. Our most formidable enemies are within ourselves; and whoever will have succeeded in fighting and vanquishing them will, in the judgment of the Wise, have done more for glory than if he had conquered the Universe.

[38] This is what strength of soul or fortitude accomplishes; this is how it can enlighten the mind, expand genius and endow all the other virtues with energy and vigor; it can even make up for those we lack; for someone who might be neither courageous, nor just, nor wise, nor moderate by inclination, will yet be so by reason, as soon as having overcome his passions and vanquished his prejudices

he senses how much it redounds to his advantage to be so; as soon as he is convinced that he can realize his own happiness only by working for that of others. Fortitude is then the virtue which characterizes Heroism, and it is so as well by another irrefutable argument which I derive from the reflections of a great man: the other virtues, says *Bacon*, deliver us from the dominion of the vices; only fortitude secures us against the dominion of fortune. Indeed, what [*1274*] virtues are not in need of appropriate circumstances to set them to work? Of what use is justice with tyrants, prudence with the insane, temperance in misery? But all events honor a man of strength or fortitude, happiness and adversity contribute equally to his glory, and he rules no less in chains than on the Throne. Regulus's martyrdom in Carthage, Cato's feast upon being denied the Consulship, Epictetus's equanimity upon being crippled by his master, are no less illustrious than the triumphs of Alexander and of Caesar; and if Socrates had died in his bed, one might now wonder whether he was anything more than a skillful Sophist.

[39] Having ascertained the virtue which most properly belongs to the Hero, I should go on to speak of those who achieved Heroism without possessing it. But how could they have achieved it without the part which alone constitutes the true Hero and is essential to him? I have nothing to say to this, and that is the triumph of my cause. Among the celebrated men whose names are inscribed in the Temple of Glory, some have lacked wisdom, others moderation; some have been cruel, some unjust, some imprudent, some treacherous; all have had weaknesses; not one of them has been a weak man. In a word, some great men may have lacked all the other virtues; but there has never been a Hero without strength of soul or fortitude.

Abbreviations and textual conventions

Buffon, *OP*	Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, *Oeuvres philosophiques*, edited by Jean Piveteau (PUF, Paris, 1954)
CC	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Correspondance complète*, collected, edited, and annotated by R.A. Leigh (Institut et Musée Voltaire, Geneva, and The Voltaire Foundation at the Taylor Institution, Oxford, 1965–1989)
Conf.	*Confessions*
d'Alembert	*Lettre à M. d'Alembert sur les spectacles*, or *Letter to M. d'Alembert on the Theater*, edited by M. Fuchs (Droz, Geneva, 1948); *OC* V, 1–125
tr.	translated by A. Bloom as *Politics and the Arts* (The Free Press, Glencoe, IL, 1960)
Dictionnaire de Musique	in *OC* V, 603–1191
Discourses tr.	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The "Discourses" and other early political writings*, translated, with an Introduction and Notes, by Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, 1997)
Emile tr.	translation by A. Bloom (Basic Books, New York, 1979)
First Discourse	*Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*: in *Discourses* tr.
Franquières	*Letter to Franquières*: in *SC* tr.
Geneva ms.	the extensive early draft of the *Social Contract*: partially in *SC* tr.

Grotius, *Right*	Grotius, *The Right of War and Peace* (1725; edn. cited: London, 1738)
Hero	*Discourse on the Virtue a Hero Most Needs* or *Discourse on Heroic Virtue*: in *Discourses* tr.
Hobbes, *De cive*	Hobbes, *De cive*
tr.	edited by H. Warrander as *On the Citizen* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1983)
Ineq.	*Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men* (the so-called *Second Discourse*): in *Discourses* tr
ED	Epistle Dedicatory
P	Preface
E	Exordium
N	Rousseau's Notes, thus: N IX [13] refers to para. 13 of Rousseau's Note IX
Languages	*Essay on the Origin of Languages*: in *Discourses* tr.
Meier, *Diskurs/Discours*	Heinrich Meier, *Diskurs über die Ungleichheit/Discours sur l'inégalité, kritische Ausgabe des integralen Textes, mit sämtlichen Fragmenten und ergänzenden Materialien nach den Originalausgaben und den Handschriften neu ediert, übersetzt und kommentiert* (2nd, rev. and enlarged edn., Schöningh, Munich, 1990)
Method	*Idea of the Method in the Composition of a Book*: in *Discourses* tr.
Montaigne, *OC*	Montaigne, *Oeuvres complètes*, edited by A. Thibaudet and M. Rat (Paris, Pléiade, 1962)
Montaigne tr.	Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, translated by Donald Frame (Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1958)
Narcissus	*Preface to "Narcissus"*: in *Discourses* tr.
NH	*La Nouvelle Héloïse*
OC	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres complètes*, edited by B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond (Paris, Pléiade, 1959–1995). For example, *OC* III, 202–204 refers to pages 202–204 in volume III; [202] in the body of a translation indicates that what follows corresponds to page 202 of the relevant volume of *OC*.
Philopolis	*Letter to Philopolis*: in *Discourses* tr.

Pol. Ec.	*Discourse on Political Economy*: in *SC* tr.
Poland	*Considerations on the Government of Poland*: in *SC* tr.
Pufendorf, *Droit*	Samuel Pufendorf, *Le Droit de la nature et des gens*, translated and annotated by Jean Barbeyrac (edn. cited: Amsterdam, 1712)
Pufendorf, *Man and Citizen*	Samuel Pufendorf, *Les Devoirs de l'homme et du citoyen*, translated by Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, 1991)
Rêveries	*Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*,
tr.	translated as *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* by Charles E. Butterworth (New York University Press, New York, 1979; reprint, Hackett Publishing, Indianapolis and Cambridge, MA, 1992)
SC	*Of the Social Contract*: in *SC* tr.
SC tr.	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *"The Social Contract" and other later political writings*, translated, with an Introduction and Notes, by Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, 1997)
Second Discourse	*Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men*: in *Discourses* tr.
Second Letter	*Preface of a Second Letter to Bordes*: in *Discourses* tr.
Vaughan, *Rousseau*	*Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Political Writings*, edited by C. E. Vaughan, 2 vols. (CUP, Cambridge, 1915; reprinted by Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1962)
Voltaire	*Letter to Voltaire*: in *Discourses* tr.
War	*The State of War*: in *SC* tr.

[23]	paragraph numbers
[*23*]	*OC* page numbers (see explanation above)
*, **	Rousseau's footnotes, numbered by paragraph in the sequence *, **

Editorial notes

First Discourse (pages 1–28)

The Dijon *Académie des sciences et belles lettres* announced the topic of its 1750 Prize Essay Competition – "Has the Restoration of the Sciences and Arts Contributed to the Purification of Morals?" – in the October 1749 *Mercure de France.* Entries had to be submitted by 1 April 1750, and they were to take up no more than half an hour's reading time. The Academy reached its decision in July, and announced it in August.

Rousseau on several occasions in later life recalled his excitement on first reading the announcement of the Academy's topic. He had gone to visit his friend Diderot, who had just been released from the Vincennes dungeon but was still confined to the castle grounds for having – anonymously – published his *Pensées philosophiques* (1746) and his *Letter about the Blind* (1749). He had a copy of the latest issue of the *Mercure de France* in his pocket, and as he was walking along he began to leaf through it. When he came upon the announcement of the Academy Question he was so overwhelmed by the rush of thoughts it aroused in him that he had to sit down by the side of the road to try to sort them out. Almost a quarter of century later, in the second of four important autobiographical letters to Malesherbes, he wrote: "Everything I have been able to retain of the great truths which during a quarter of an hour illumined me beneath that tree has been feebly scattered throughout my three principal writings, this first discourse, the one on inequality, and the treatise on education [*Emile*], which three works are inseparable" (12 January 1762; *OC* I, 1136; see also *Confessions* VIII, *OC* I, 350–352, 356, and *Rousseau Juge de Jean Jacques* II, *OC* I, 828f.).

The major recent editions of the *First Discourse* are:

George R. Havens, *Jean Jacques Rousseau: Discours sur les sciences et les arts, édition critique avec une introduction et un commentaire* (Modern Language Association of America, New York, 1946).
François Bouchardy's critical edition in *OC* III, 1–30, 1137–1156.
Michel Launay's critical edition in the Intégrale *Oeuvres complètes de Rousseau*, 3 vols. (Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1967–1971), vol. II, pp. 52–68.

Claude Pichois and René Pintard, *Jean-Jacques entre Socrate et Caton* (Corti, Paris, 1972) contains interesting and previously unpublished fragments and drafts of the *First Discourse* and of related texts; they have been included in the appendix to the more recent printings of the third volume of the Pléiade edition of the *OC*.

L. Delaruelle, "Les Sources principales de J.-J. Rousseau dans le Premier Discours à l'académie de Dijon," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* (1912), 19: 245–271, remains helpful.

The Dijon Academy and the circumstances surrounding the 1750 competition are described in Marcel Bouchard, *L'Académie de Dijon et le premier Discours de Rousseau* (Paris, 1950).

Discourse Rousseau called four of his works "Discourses": the present text, that on *Inequality*, that on *Heroic Virtue*, and a *Discourse on Riches*. The first three were occasioned by Academy competitions. They may therefore have called for oratorical flourishes, and at least the appearance of being suited to public delivery. They may therefore also appear to be more popular than formal "Treatises," which is what he calls both the *Social Contract* (in the prefatory Note to that work, and in a footnote of the *Emile*, *OC* IV, 582) and *Emile* (in the letter to Malesherbes cited in the second paragraph of these notes, above). The so-called *Discourse on Political Economy* was commissioned and written as an article for Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopedia*, and was dubbed *Discourse* by the publisher who first brought out an unauthorized separate edition of it. Machiavelli called his major work *Discourses*; Hobbes refers to the *De cive* as well as to the *Leviathan* as "Discourses" in the Epistles Dedicatory to these works; Locke calls his *Treatises of Government* a "Discourse" in the very first line of his preface to them; Algernon Sidney wrote *Discourses Concerning Government*: the list could be extended almost at will, and it would certainly not have to be restricted to popular or political works alone.

A Citizen of Geneva Rousseau stresses the political character of his work from the first: the author has a political identity, but no personal name. Strictly speaking, he could not claim Genevan citizenship at this time. He had forfeited it by converting to Catholicism just before he turned sixteen, in 1728. He reconverted to Protestantism and was

restored to Genevan citizenship on 1 August 1754. He was later to say that he put *Citizen of Geneva* only on the title page of books which he thought would do his native city honor (*NH*, 2nd preface, *OC* II, 27). ***Here I am the barbarian*** ***Barbarus hic ego sum quia non intelligor illis***, Ovid, *Tristia* V, X, line 37. Rousseau slightly altered a verse Ovid (43 BC–AD 18) wrote while exiled among the Sarmatians, a tribe closely related to the Scythians. Just as the sophisticated poet from Imperial Rome felt that the Sarmatians took him for a barbarian, so Rousseau expected sophisticated *ancien régime* France to mistake his defense of austere republican virtue for a defense of barbarism. In the event he was not proved wrong. He had cited the same line from Ovid at the end of an early letter to de Conzié (17 January 1742, *CC* I, 139, no. 43), and that same year he had also used it as the epigraph to a collection of youthful writings, *La Muse allobroge* (*The Boorish Muse*) (Leigh, in *CC* I, 143, note dd; Ch. Guyot, in *OC* II, 1123n.); he again chose it as an epigraph for the important late apologetic text, *Dialogues, Rousseau Juge de Jean-Jacques*, *OC* I, 657). Samuel Pufendorf, whose *Droit de la nature et des gens* (*Right of Nature and of Nations*) Rousseau knew well, quotes the same verse of Ovid's in the context of his discussion of the origin of language (*Droit* IV, 1, § vi, note a).

Barillot & Son, Geneva Although the first edition of the *Discourse* appeared with a Genevan publisher's name on the title page, it would seem that it was brought out by Pissot in Paris, in January 1751 (Leigh, in *CC* II, 135f.).

For an edition of the *Discourse* that was also to include some of the *Replies to Critics* translated in the present volume, Rousseau drafted the following prefatory note:

> What is fame? Here is the unfortunate work to which I owe mine. Certainly this piece which earned me a prize and made me a name, is mediocre at best, and, I dare say, it is one of the slightest in this entire collection. What an abyss of miseries the author would have been spared if this first writing had been received only as it deserved to be! But it seemed fated that an initially unjust acclaim should gradually bring down on me strictures that are even more so.

The dissatisfaction which he here voices with the *Discourse* refers exclusively to its rhetorical and literary features. He never retracted the views he developed in it.

The "initially unjust," that is to say undeserved, "acclaim" which he mentions was quite extraordinary. He describes it briefly in *Confessions* VIII, *OC* I, 363f. The subsequent, even more unjust, "strictures" culminated in 1762 with the Paris Parliament's condemning of the

Emile and ordering Rousseau's arrest, and with Geneva's condemning and publicly burning both the *Emile* and the *Social Contract*, and also ordering their author's arrest. Other expulsions followed, and Rousseau had to flee from one refuge to another for many years.

[2] **the League** Organized in 1576 by the Duc de Guise in order to rally Catholic resistance to Huguenot advances in France and overthrow King Henry III.

[3] **notes . . . easily recognized additions** They have, on the contrary, proven quite difficult to identify. Most probably one of the notes he added is his discreet reference to Diderot's *Pensées philosophiques*, which had been publicly condemned shortly after its publication in 1746. Most probably one of the additions is the passage in which he speaks of "the sentiment of that original freedom for which they [men] seemed born" [9]; cp. Bouchardy's note in *OC* III, 1240, and Launay, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau écrivain politique* (ACER, Grenoble, 1971), pp. 141–145; Pichois and Pintard, *Jean-Jacques entre Socrate et Caton*, pp. 40, 75. But regardless of what may have been the specific changes he made in his final text, Rousseau is here clearly saying that they sharpened his criticism of the Enlightenment and the *ancien régime*.

We are deceived . . . *Decipimur specie recti*, Horace, *On the Art of Poetry*, line 25, where Horace (65–8 BC) says that it is the poets who are so deceived.

[5] **learned Associations . . . the truly Learned** *Savant* (n., adj.), "learned," is etymologically related to *science*, "knowledge," as "artist" is to "art"; it may range in meaning from "scholar(ly)" to "scientist" or "scientific"; similarly, *science*, as in the title of this *Discourse*, is not restricted in meaning to "science" in the narrow sense of the term, or to "natural science," but means "knowledge" or "learning" in any of its senses; as, for example, in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, a work of which the present *Discourse* is an almost point-by-point criticism. "Arts," in the title as well as throughout this *Discourse*, must also be understood in the broad and now somewhat old-fashioned sense which includes skills and crafts as well as the fine arts.

[8] **the Throne of Constantine** Constantinople, the medern Istanbul, was conquered by the Turks in 1453.

[9] **that original freedom for which they seemed born** See Editorial Note on [3] above, about "easily recognized additions," and cp. "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains" (*SC* I [1]).

[9]* **Ichthyophagi** Literally "fish-eaters"; the episode is also mentioned by Montesquieu, *Of the Spirit of the Laws* XXI, 8.

[11] **virtue . . . the strength and vigor of the soul** Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), whose *Essays* are a constant source and guide for

the early Rousseau, uses the expression, though not as a definition of virtue, in "Of the Younger Cato," *Essays* I, 37 (*Oeuvres complètes*, edited by A. Thibaudet and M. Rat [Pléiade, Paris, 1962, cited hereafter as Montaigne, *OC*], p. 225 and *The Complete Essays*, translated by Donald Frame [Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1958, cited hereafter as Montaigne tr.], p. 169); Rousseau speaks of "vigor of soul" again in this *Discourse* [49]. He develops the view that strength of soul defines heroic virtue, and that the younger Cato (95–46 BC) is the embodiment of this form of virtue, in the *Discourse on Heroic Virtue* [33]–[39]; Plato refers to "strength of soul" in the *Statesman* (259c), a dialogue Rousseau cites; see also Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, IV, viii. I owe the last two references to S. Benardete, *The Being of the Beautiful* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1984), section III, p. 150, n. 7.

[14] **Pyrrhonism** The skepticism or zeteticism founded by Pyrrho of Elis (*c.* 365–*c.* 275 BC) that seeks suspension of judgment or *epoche* and imperturbability or *ataraxia* (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of the Eminent Philosophers* IX, 61–108, see 107); "Pyrrhonism" is therefore commonly regarded as undermining the bases of loyalty, social life and religious belief.

[14]* ***I like*, says Montaigne** In "On the Art of Discussion," *Essays* III, 8 (Montaigne, *OC* 901; Frame tr., 702); the exception is most probably Diderot.

[17] **Consider Egypt . . . Sesostris** Legendary Egyptian ruler in the thirteenth century BC (see Herodotus, *Histories* II, 102–110). **conquered by Cambyses** Second king of Persia, he conquered Egypt in 525 BC; **by the Greeks** Alexander the Great conquered it in 332 BC; **the Romans** conquered it under Augustus, in 30 BC; **the Arabs** did so under Caliph Omar I, in AD 638; **the Turks** did so in 1517.

[18] **Consider Greece . . . twice vanquished Asia** In the Trojan War, and at Salamis in 480 BC. **the Macedonian's yoke** Philip of Macedon's (382–336 BC) defeat of the allied armies of Athens and Thebes at the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC marked the end of Greek independence. **Demosthenes** The greatest of Athens's orators (385–322 BC), he tried to alert his compatriots to the Macedonian danger before Chaeronea, and to rouse them against Macedonian rule after it.

[19] **Ennius** Regarded by the Romans as their first poet (239–189 BC). **Terence** The Roman comic poet (*c.* 185–159 BC). **Romulus, who** founded Rome in 735 BC, was, according to tradition, a **shepherd. Ovid** Rousseau here refers to him as the author of *The Art of Love*, although he had drawn on another poem of his for the epigraph of this *Discourse*. **Catullus** (84–54 BC), writer of erotic poems. **Martial** (AD 40–104), writer of epigrammatic social satires. **Arbiter of good taste**

Petronius, author of the *Satyricon*, and a companion of the Emperor Nero (AD 14–68), who put him in charge of the Imperial pleasures in AD 66 (cp. Tacitus, *Annals* XVI, 18f.). Nero is again excoriated in the speech which Rousseau has Fabricius deliver, this *Discourse* [32].

[21] **China . . . the yoke of the . . . Tartar** Genghis Khan invaded China in the first quarter of the thirteenth century.

[22] **Persians . . . a Philosophical Romance** Xenophon (*c.* 430–*c.* 354 BC), *Education of Cyrus*; Rousseau's remark suggests that he regards Xenophon's account as truer than the factually true accounts of antiquarians; he called his own *Emile* a romance (Bk. V, *OC* IV, 777; tr. 416). **the Scythians** The warlike and proverbially savage nomad people who in classical antiquity lived in what are now southwestern Russia and the Balkans. As the epigraph to this *Discourse* indicates, Rousseau knew perfectly well that opinions about the Scythians were, to say the least, divided: Montaigne speaks well of them in several essays, from which Rousseau draws in the present *Discourse*, e.g. "Of Pedantry," *Essays* I, 25 (Montaigne, *OC* 143, tr. 106); "Of Cannibals," *Essays* I, 31 (Montaigne *OC* 206f., tr. 154f.). In the *Second Discourse* (I [35]) he quotes a passage in which Justin praises them. But he also knew Herodotus's account (*Histories* IV, 1–143), and the tradition according to which, as Pufendorf put it, the Scythians ate human flesh and killed their own children on the pretext of religion (*Droit* II, 3, § viii); see also Shakespeare, *King Lear* I, i, 116–118. Gibbon summarizes what was known of the Scythians at the time in *Decline and Fall* (ch. 26). **the Germans . . . whose simplicity . . . a pen weary** Tacitus (AD *c.* 55–120), whose description of the spirit in which he wrote about the Germans Rousseau here quotes literally (*Germania* XIX, 20). **that rustic nation** Presumably the Swiss.

[22]* **happy Nations . . . Montaigne unhesitatingly prefers** "Of Cannibals," *Essays* I, 31 (in particular Montaigne, *OC* 204, 213, tr. 153, 159). Rousseau exaggerates Montaigne's preference for the cannibals' polity to Plato's *Laws*. What Montaigne says is that he regrets knowledge of the American Indians' way of life was not available "at a time when there were men better able to judge of it than we are; I regret that Lycurgus and Plato did not have it, for it seems to me that what experience shows us about those nations exceeds not only all the pictures with which poetry has embellished the golden age and all of its inventions in fancying a happy human condition, but also the conception and the very desire of philosophy."

[23]* **the Athenians' . . . upright Tribunal** The Aeropagus. **the Romans think of medicine** Plutarch, *Life of Marcus Cato, the Censor* XII; Montaigne, "Of the Resemblance of Children to Fathers," *Essays*

II, 37 (Montaigne, *OC* 745, tr. 581). **the Spaniards . . . forbid their Lawyers** Montaigne, "Of Experience," *Essays* III, 13 (Montaigne, *OC* 1043, tr. 816).
[24] **a Tyrant was . . . assembling** Peisistratos (605–527 BC) is traditionally said to have caused Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to be collected and organized into the form in which they have been handed down, and to have made them the basis of Athenian public education: Cicero, *Of the Orator* III, 34; see also Diderot's *Encyclopedia* article "Bibliothèque" ("Library").
[27] **"I have," he says . . .** Rousseau is here paraphrasing Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, 21c–22b in the translation of it which Diderot had made during his confinement at Vincennes: Diderot, *Oeuvres complètes*, edited by Herbert Diekmann, Jacques Proust and Jean Varloot (Hermann, Paris, 1978), vol. IV, pp. 251–253. Rousseau merely follows Diderot's translation in speaking of "artists" where Socrates speaks of "artisans."
[31] **the elder Cato** Marcus Porcius Cato (234–149 BC), Censor, Consul, general, diplomat, traditional model of stern Roman republican virtue, and consistent opponent of Greek learning and sophistication, who in his private capacity practiced agriculture and wrote an early treatise on the subject. **Epicurus** (*c.* 342–270 BC) taught materialism and hedonism. **Zeno** (336–264 BC) founded the Stoic sect. **Arcesilaus** (*c.* 315–240 BC) was the founder of Academic Skepticism. They are roughly contemporaries, and together represent the dominant post-Socratic-and-Aristotelian philosophical alternatives in antiquity (see also *Observations* [39]*, pp. 41f). ***Ever since . . .*** Seneca (*c.* 3 BC–AD 65), *Letters to Lucillus* XCV, 13, cited by Montaigne in "Of Pedantry," *Essays* I, 25 (Montaigne, *OC* 140, tr. 103), from which Rousseau quotes at length later in this *Discourse* [51]*.
[32] **Fabricius** Roman general, Consul and Censor (d. *c.* 250 BC), traditionally surnamed "The Just," noted for his incorruptibility and his dignified bearing in the face of adversity (see especially Vergil, *Aeneid* V, 843f.; Seneca, *On Providence* III, Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* XVIII, 20f.). In Cicero's judgment, both Fabricius and Marcus Porcius Cato possessed only a popular virtue, not virtue proper (*On Duties* III, iv, 16). **prey of a flute-player** Again the Emperor Nero. **Cineas** Ambassador of Pyrrhus, he is reported by Plutarch to have spoken of the Roman Senate in these terms (*Life of Pyrrhus* XIX, near the end).

Rousseau penciled this famous prosopopeia of Fabricius during the rush of inspiration he experienced on the road to Vincennes on first reading the Dijon Academy's Question.
[33] **Louis XII . . . Henry IV** Kings of France. The first, surnamed "Father of the People," ruled 1498–1515. The second, surnamed "The

Great," ruled 1589–1610: in 1598, he issued the Edict of Nantes, guaranteeing the religious and political rights of Protestants.

[36] **an ancient tradition** In the *Letter to Grimm* [17], Rousseau tells how he was led to wonder about the ancient Egyptians' view of the sciences by a passage in Plato. The reference is to the *Phaedrus* (274c–275b), where Socrates has an Egyptian king reject the god Theuth's gift of the arts, and especially of writing, on the grounds that it would do more harm than good.

[36]* **the Prometheus fable** The version of this fable which Rousseau here cites is drawn from Plutarch's essay *How to Profit from One's Enemies* (2), an essay which he rereads and rethinks to the very end of his life: see *Rêveries* IV, *OC* I, 1024, tr. 43.

All ancient sources – Hesiod's *Works and Days* (42–105), *Theogony* (561–616), Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*, Plato's *Statesman* (274c–d) – agree in showing Prometheus's gift accompanied by suffering for men. Plutarch has his Prometheus go on to say that fire can also profit those who learn how to use it. He suggests as much by the title of his essay. This conclusion is entirely consistent with Rousseau's argument in the remainder of the *Discourse*.

Plutarch has Prometheus himself warn against the dangers of fire; the frontispiece assigns this task to Rousseau: "Prometheus's torch is the torch of the Sciences made to quicken great geniuses; . . . the Satyr who, seeing fire for the first time, runs toward it and wants to embrace it, represents the vulgar who, seduced by the brilliance of Letters, indiscreetly give themselves over to study; . . . the Prometheus who cries out and warns them of the danger is the Citizen of Geneva" (*About a New Refutation* [11]).

Rousseau gave much thought to the illustrations for his works. He found this frontispiece, drawn by Pierre, very bad, whereas he found that for the *Second Discourse* very good (letter of 26 December 1757; *CC* IV, 408, no. 595).

[37] **the well into which truth has withdrawn** In his *Letter to Grimm* [28], Rousseau rightly points out that the expression is as old as philosophy itself. It is commonly attributed to Democritus (fl. 420 BC) (Fragment 117); Montaigne cites it, gives its source, and rejects it in "On the Art of Discussion," *Essays* III, 8 (Montaigne, *OC* 906, tr. 708), an essay from which Rousseau had quoted above.

[38]* **the Peripatetics** I.e. the Aristotelians. René Descartes (1596–1650) had propounded his theory of extended substance and vortices in order to provide a rigorously mathematical and mechanical physics; cp. *Le Monde*, edited by Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris, 1897–1910), vol. XI, pp. 43–47; *Principles of Philosophy* (II, 33–35; III, 45–53; IV, 2). Descartes's theory was overthrown by Newton.

[39] **in what ratios bodies attract one another** Newton's law of universal gravitation: bodies attract one another in direct proportion to their mass and in inverse proportion to the square of their distance. **the proportions ... swept** Kepler's second law: the vector radius from the sun to a planet sweeps out equal areas in equal times. **man sees everything in God** The doctrine propounded by Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715) in *Recherche de la vérité* (*Search for Truth*). **two clocks** An image used by Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646–1716) to illustrate his doctrine of the preestablished harmony (e.g. *Second Eclaircissement du Nouveau Système*; and Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, "Rorarius," note H, near the end); **what stars may be inhabited** Probably refers to Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle's (1657–1757) work of scientific popularization, *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (*Conversations about the Multiplicity of Worlds*). **Insects reproduce** A subject studied during the decades preceding the writing of this *Discourse* by R.-A. Ferchaud de Réaumur (1683–1757), as well as by Charles Bonnet (1720–1793), both of whom Rousseau knew; Bonnet later wrote a refutation of Rousseau's *Second Discourse* under the pseudonym Philopolis (pp. 223–228 above).

[41] **sumptuary laws** That is to say, laws to tax and curb luxury; Rousseau returns to the issue in his *Letter to Raynal* [7], and in the *Observations* [51] *et seq.*. He deals with it at some length in the *Discourse on Political Economy* [24], [76] and in the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, 3 [14], both in *SC* tr. **this paradox** That the pursuit of personal wealth and the promotion of luxury contribute to the common weal; or, as Mandeville put it in the subtitle to his *Fable of the Bees, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*. At the time, this was a novel doctrine, propounded by some English economists. It had recently been brought to the attention of the French public by J.-F. Melon, as Rousseau indicates in his *Last Reply* [71], and it had been cleverly popularized by Voltaire in two notorious poems, "Le Mondain" (1736), and "Défense du Mondain, ou l'apologie du luxe" (1737). Although Rousseau does not here name these poems and their author, they are very clearly the targets of this criticism: he apostrophizes Voltaire three paragraphs below. **The ancient politicians** The same thought is stated in almost the same words by Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755), *Of the Spirit of the Laws* (1748) III, 3. **One will tell you** "Sir Petty assumed, in his calculations, that a man in England is worth what he would be sold for in Algiers. That must be true only of England. There are countries where a man is worth nothing; and others where he is worth less than nothing" (Montesquieu, *Of the Spirit of the Laws* XXIII, 17, and cp. III, 13). The

reference is to Sir William Petty, author of *Essay on Political Arithmetick* (1680); Algiers is where Moorish pirates sold Christian prisoners into slavery. **Sybarite ... Lacedaemonians** The inhabitants of the Greek city of Sybaris were so notorious for their love of luxury that their name has remained a synonym for dissoluteness. Sybaris was destroyed by the Crotoniats in 515 BC. The Sybarites claimed that the Crotoniats had Spartan help. The Crotoniats denied it. Herodotus, after reporting these conflicting claims, invites the reader to decide between them (*Histories* v, 44f.). Rousseau clearly believes the Crotoniats' version of the events.

[42] **The Monarchy of Cyrus** Alexander the Great conquered Persia in 334 BC; the Scythians resisted the Persians under Darius (512 BC) and later the Macedonians under Alexander. **Two famed Republics** Rome and Carthage – which Montesquieu compares (in *Causes de la grandeur des Romains* IV) in the same terms as those in which Rousseau here compares them – Rome defeating Carthage in the Punic wars, 264–241 BC, 218–201 BC, 149–146 BC. **The Roman Empire** fell to the barbarian invasions of the Goths, the Vandals, and the Huns. **The Franks**, a Germanic people, **conquered the Gauls** in the fifth century, and **the Saxons**, another Germanic people, **conquered** England in the fifth and sixth centuries. **poor Mountaineers** The Swiss defeated the Habsburgs of Austria in 1315 and 1386 and Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, in 1476. **Charles the Fifth's heir** Philip II of Spain (1527–1598) was, as an early English translator of the *Discourse* remarks, defeated by "*The Hollanders* whose Employment was the *Herring-Fishery*"; they successfully rebelled against Spanish rule in 1568, and a decade later established their independence (*A Discourse ... By a Citizen of Geneva*, translated by R. Wynne, A.M., London, 1752, p. 32n.).

[44] **famed Arouet** More famed, of course, in his public guise and by his pen name, Voltaire (1694–1778).

[44]* **reflections [by] Plato** In the *Republic* v, 451c–464b; Rousseau frequently returned to this question; for example, in *Discourse on Inequality*, ED [20], and I [42] with the Editorial Note; Book v of *Emile*; and throughout the *Nouvelle Héloïse*.

[45] **Carle** Vanloo (1705–1765) and Jean-Baptiste-Marie **Pierre** (1713–1789) were renowned painters. **Praxiteles and Phidias**, the greatest sculptors of classical Greece. Jean-Baptiste **Pigal[le]** (1714–1785) was a fashionable sculptor.

[47] **the Goths ravaged Greece** Under Alaric I, in the early fifth century. **Charles the Eighth King** of France (1483–1498) who conquered Tuscany and Naples in 1495. Both episodes are taken almost

literally from Montaigne's "Of Pedantry," *Essays* I, 25 (Montaigne, *OC* 143, tr. 106); but in Montaigne the remark about the effects of studies on martial polities served as an introduction to the illustrative episodes, whereas in Rousseau it serves as their conclusion. Montaigne had earlier been speaking of Sparta, and it is to Sparta that he refers when speaking of "this martial polity." Rousseau failed to make the verbal change required by his paraphrase of Montaigne's paragraph, and hence his reference to "this" martial polity remains without an antecedent. The whole of Montaigne's essay is particularly relevant to the argument of the subsequent three paragraphs.

[49] **Cannae . . . Trasimene** Hannibal's greatest victories against Rome, in 216 and 217 BC respectively. Caesar **crossed the Rubicon** In 49 BC, thereby in effect bringing the Republic to an end.

[50] **more strength and vigor than . . . bravery** "So sensible were the Romans of the imperfection of valor without skill and practice, that, in their language, the name of an army was borrowed from the word which signified exercise (*exercitus ab exercitando*)": Gibbon, (*Decline and Fall*, ch. 1; see also Cicero, *On Duties* I, 61–92. On *strength and vigor* cp. this *Discourse* [11] and the corresponding Editorial Note.

[51] **said a Wise man** Montaigne, in "Of Pedantry," *Essays* I, 25 (Montaigne, *OC* 137, tr. 101); the whole of Rousseau's long note immediately following is also drawn from that essay (Montaigne, *OC* 141f., tr. 104f.).

[51]* **Pens Philosoph** In the context of a discussion of the doctrine that has God condemn some to be damned, Diderot remarks "Of some people it ought to be said not that they fear God, but rather that they are scared of him" (*Pensées philosophiques* VIII). Even this discreet reference was quite daring, since his friend's book had been publicly condemned in 1746; cp. the "Preface" [3] above, and the Editorial Note.

[51]** **the greatest of their Kings** Agesilaus (early ninth century BC); see Plutarch, *Sayings of the Spartans* 67. **Plato** In *Alcibiades* I, 121d–122a; however, see also Plato, *Laws* III, 694a–698a. **Astyages, in Xenophon** This frequently cited episode is found in *Education of Cyrus* I, iii, 17; Montaigne's paraphrase ("Of Pedantry", *Essays* I, 25; Montaigne, *OC* 142; tr., p. 105) which Rousseau is here citing comes much closer to equating the just with the legal than does Cyrus's teacher in Xenophon's account. **τύπτω** "I hit." **genere demonstrativo** The school term for the rhetorical form which Aristotle calls epideictic; cp. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* I, 3, with Quintilian, *Institutes* II, xx, 23.

[55] **great Monarch** Louis XIV (reigned 1643–1715) established numerous academies.

[56] **his august successor** Louis XV, who reigned 1715–1774. **imitated by all the Kings** Among them Stanislas, deposed king of

Poland, to whose "Reply" to this *Discourse* Rousseau replies in turn, in his *Observations*.

[57] **there are no bodies** George Berkeley (1685–1753). **no substance other than matter and no God other than the world**. Since Rousseau is attributing both of these tenets to one doctrine, and since the equation between God and the world most clearly points to Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), it would seem that he is here suggesting that Spinoza was a materialist, a bold but defensible interpretation; cp. *Ethics* I, 15 (scholium) and letter no. 56 with Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, "Spinoza," note N, II. **neither virtues nor vices** Evidently the philosophers' "internal doctrine" (see the Editorial Note on *Observations* [39]*, pp. 334f. below), in the form given to that doctrine by Diderot and practiced by his epigone Melchior Grimm; cp. Diderot's letter to Landois of 26 June 1756 and Grimm's *Correspondance littéraire* for 1 July and 15 July 1756, with *Rousseau Juge de Jean-Jacques*, Dialogue II (*OC* I, 841f.), Dialogue I (*OC* I, 695); cp. *Confessions* IX (*OC* I, 468), *Rêveries* III (OC I, 1022, tr. 38). **men are wolves** Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), near the beginning of the Epistle Dedicatory to his *De cive* or *On the Citizen* (1651), remarks that "both sayings are very true: 'that man to man is a kind of God; and that man to man is an arrant wolf'": *De cive*, edited by H. Warrander (Clarendon, Oxford, 1983), p. 24; hereafter cited as *De cive*; cp. Plautus, *Asinaria* II, iv, 88.

[58] **Leucippus** Founded the atomist school (mid-fifth century BC). **Diagoras** Disciple of the atomists, he was surnamed "the Atheist," and in 411 BC Athens prosecuted him for impiety. **the dangerous reveries of . . . Hobbes** In the Epistle Dedicatory to his 1649 French translation of Hobbes's *De cive* which Rousseau used, Sorbière had expressed his preference for "the reveries of Hobbes, Gassendi, and Descartes" to the more serious thoughts of some other philosophers. Rousseau's own last writing was called *Rêveries*.

[58]* **Sultan Ahmed** [III] Ruled from 1703 to 1730, and established a printing press in 1727. The anecdote about **Caliph Omar**, who ruled 634–641, is recounted in Diderot's *Encyclopedia* article, "Bibliothèque" ("Library"). **Gregory the Great** Pope from 590 to 604 who was reputed to have had all pagan books in the Palatine library destroyed, and in the *Pensées philosophiques* to which Rousseau had earlier referred – this *Discourse* [51] – Diderot speaks of Gregory's "barbarous zeal" against letters, adding "If it had been up to that Pontiff alone, we would be in the condition of the Mohammedans, who are reduced to reading nothing but their Koran" (XLIV). As for Gregorian chant, see *Languages* 19 [4]–[7].

[59] **Verulam** Francis Bacon (1561–1626) was created Baron Verulam in 1618. **Descartes** See also this *Discourse* [38]*, and on **Newton** see

[39]; on Bacon, Descartes, and Newton see also Jean Le Rond d'Alembert's (1717–1783) *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia* (pt. II, near the beginning), an important manifesto of the Enlightenment which appeared within a year of this *Discourse* of Rousseau's. **feel . . . the strength to go forth alone** Descartes describes himself as doing so in his *Discourse on Method* II (edited by Etienne Gilson [Vrin, Paris, 1947], p. 16, lines 24–30). **The Prince of Eloquence** M. Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC), orator, statesman, philosopher, was Consul in 63 BC. **perhaps the greatest of Philosophers** Bacon was Lord Chancellor in 1618.
[61] **speak well . . . act well** The Athenians and the Spartans; cp. Plutarch, *Marcus Cato* XXII, 4, cited by Montaigne, again in "Of Pedantry," *Essays* I, 25 (Montaigne, *OC* 142, tr. 105).

Letter to Raynal (pages 29–31)

Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal (1713–1796) is now primarily remembered as the author of the *Philosophical and Political History of the Europeans' Institutions and Commerce in the Two Indies* (1770), a work noted for its anticlerical and politically audacious views. He had been a Jesuit, but had left the Order in the late 1740s. In 1750 he became the editor of the *Mercure de France*. By this time he and Rousseau had become acquainted. In the June 1751 issue of the *Mercure* he published some brief and quite friendly "Observations on 'the Discourse' that was crowned at Dijon" in the guise of a summary of comments by a number of unnamed critics. The same issue also carried the present *Letter* of Rousseau's, replying to these "Observations."

The *Letter to Raynal* has most recently been edited by Bouchardy in *OC* III, 31–33; and by Launay in the Intégrale *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. II, pp. 70–71, who also reproduces Raynal's "Observations" (p. 69); as does Ludwig Tente, *Die Polemik um den ersten Discours in Frankreich und Deutschland* (Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, 1974), pp. 126f.

The italicized passages in the "Letter" are Rousseau's citations from the text he is discussing.
[2] **I myself said that it is worse than ignorance** *First Discourse* [8].
[8] **spare me the trouble of transcribing** Both ask what the practical consequences of Rousseau's argument are for states as well as for individuals.
[13] **the opponent . . . I am threatened with** Raynal had said that there were rumors of a forthcoming rebuttal of the *Discourse* by an

Academician from "one of the better cities"; he was presumably alerting Rousseau to Stanislas's "Reply."

Observations (pages 32–51)

The September 1751 issue of the *Mercure de France* carried an anonymous "Reply" to the *First Discourse*, and Rousseau's *Observations* about it appeared in October 1751. Rousseau knew that his anonymous critic was Stanislas Leszinski (1677–1766), formerly Stanislas I, twice deposed king of Poland and the father-in-law of Louis XV of France, and he several times alludes to his critic's high station. In the *Confessions* he recalls this exchange with King Stanislas. "I seized the opportunity to show the public how a private person might defend the cause of truth even against a sovereign. It is difficult to take a tone at once more proud and more respectful than the tone I took to answer him" (VIII; *OC* I, 366).

The *Observations* have most recently been edited by Bouchardy in *OC* III, 35–57; by Launay in the Intégrale *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. II, pp. 76–86, who also reprints Stanislas's "Reply" to the *Discourse* (pp. 72–76), as does Tente, *Polemik*, pp. 158–169.

The italicized passages are, again, Rousseau's direct quotations from the text he is discussing.

[11] **too little common measure** Between a King praising a commoner, and a commoner praising a King.

[11]* **Pliny The Younger** (61–*c.* 113) wrote a *Panegyric* of the Emperor Trajan from which Rousseau quotes in the *Second Discourse* II [37].

[12]* ***Love of Letters Inspires . . . Virtue*** See also Rousseau's remarks on this topic in his *Letter about a New Refutation* [5].

[17] **the jewelry of the Egyptians** *Exodus* 3:22, 12:35; Augustine had said that one cannot safely appropriate their jewelry, that is to say the pagan "worldly sciences," without first celebrating the Passover: *De doctr. Christ.* II, 41.

[22] **impious . . . Alfonso X** King of Spain (1252–1284) and a keen student of astronomy, he is reported to have said that if God had asked him, he would have given him advice on how to improve the Creation. See, for example, Bayle, *Dictionary*, "Castille," note H; Leibniz, *Theodicy*, § 193.

[26] **one modern people** The Swiss, *First Discourse* [22]. **drawing abhorrent comparisons** between ancient or alien nations and contemporary European societies.

[27] **I am asked here** I.e. in King Stanislas's "Reply."

[27]* **Preface to the Encyclopedia** Usually referred to as the *Preliminary Discourse*, written in 1751 by Jean Le Rond d'Alembert. Part II ends with a brief discussion of the argument of the *First Discourse*.
[36] **Josephus and Philo** Flavius Josephus, Jewish historian (37–*c*.95) wrote the *Jewish Antiquities* and the *Jewish War*. Philo, called Judaeus (20 BC–AD 45), a philosopher, sought to synthesize Platonic and Biblical thought. **The Sadducees . . . the Pharisees** Religious parties or, as Josephus, who himself was a Pharisee, said (*Jewish War* II, 18, ii–xiv), philosophical sects among the Jews; the Pharisees affirmed, and the Sadducees denied, that in addition to the written law, Moses had received a divine oral law at Sinai; accordingly, the Pharisees affirmed and the Sadducees denied the immortality of the soul. Jesus taxed the first with hypocrisy, and the second with irreligion (*Mark* 12:18–27; cp. *Luke* 20:27–39, *Matthew* 22:23).
[36]* ***Bourgeois Gentilhomme*** Molière's play was first performed in 1670.
[39] **Saint Justin the Martyr** Christian apologist, martyred in Rome around 165.
[39]* **Lucian** The Greek satirical writer (125–190) best known for his *Dialogues of the Dead*. **Tertullian** Powerful and influential Christian apologist (*c*. 155–*c*. 220). **The Epicureans . . . the Academics . . . the Stoics** Views about religion held by the major philosophical schools are reported and discussed most fully in Cicero's dialogue *On the Nature of the Gods*, to which Rousseau alludes in the last paragraph of this long note. **Cyrenaics, as reported by Diogenes Laertius** A school of hedonism founded by Aristippus of Cyrene, sometime companion of Socrates (Plato, *Phaedo* 59c); Rousseau here quotes from the account of Aristippus in Diogenes Laertius's (third century AD) *Lives and Opinions of the Eminent Philosophers* (II, 98f.): *Sustulit amicitiam quod ea neque insipientibus neque sapientibus adsit . . . Probabile dicebat prudentem virum non seipsum pro patria periculis exponere, neque enim pro insipientium commodis amittendam esse prudentiam. Furto quoque et adulterio et sacrilegio cum tempestivum erit daturum operam sapientem. Nihil quippe horum turpe natura esse. Sed auferatur de hisce vulgaris opinio, quae e stultorum imperitorumque plebecula conflata est . . . sapientem publice absque ullo pudore ac suspicione scortis congressurum.* **Pythagoras** (fl. 540–510 BC). The doctrine primarily associated with his name is that "the principles of numbers are the elements of all the beings" (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I, 5, 986a 1 and context). His school drew a distinction between the *acousmatics*, or those of his followers who had heard only summaries of his teaching, and the *mathematicians*, or those who had learned the fully elaborated teaching. Diderot refers to this doctrine of double truth in

his *Encyclopedia* article "Pythagorisme." **The internal doctrine . . . the Chinese . . . Atheists or Philosophers** Jean Baptiste Barbeyrac, in the preface to his French edition of Pufendorf's *Le Droit de la nature et des gens* (*Right of Nature and of Nations*), which Rousseau knew well, writes about a Chinese philosopher "whose sentiments prevail to this day": "His disciples have an *external doctrine* which they preach to the people in order, they say, to hold it to its duties, and which consists in teaching that there is a real difference between good and evil, the just and the unjust, and that there is another life where one will be rewarded or punished for what one has done in this life. But the *internal doctrine*, which is only for the initiates, reduces itself to a kind of *Spinozism* which wipes out religion and morals" (p. lxxv). So, too, Locke (1632–1704): "the Jesuits themselves, the great encomiasts of the Chinese, do all to a man agree, and will convince us that the sect of the literati, or learned, keeping to the old religion of China, and the ruling party there, are all of them atheists." *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), I, 4, § viii; see also Bayle, *Dictionary*, "Spinoza," note B; and the Editorial Note about the "internal doctrine" to *First Discourse* [57], p. 331 above.
[39]** **Clement of Alexandria** (*c.* 150–*c.* 215) was author of, among others, an *Hortatory Address to the Greeks* aimed at converting them.
[43] **subject the word of God to the rules of Grammar** Gregory the Great; the remark is reported by Bayle, *Dictionary*, "Gregory," note M, as well as by Diderot, *Pensées philosophiques* (1746), XLIV; on Pope Gregory, see also *First Discourse* [58]*.
[48] ***not in the manner of Aristotle*** *Non Aristotelico more, sed Piscatorio.*
[51] ***for every Aristippus*** . . . The founder of the Cyrenaic school of philosophy; see Editorial Note to [39]* above.
[53] **hypocrisy an homage vice pays to virtue** François de La Rochefoucauld (1613–1680), *Maxims* (1678), no. 218. **beautiful souls** or *belles âmes*, are, as the context indicates, passionate and forthright, and even their faults may be innocent, in contrast to petty, calculating hypocrites, who are suspect even when they do what is right. The heroine and the hero of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* are "beautiful souls" (I, x; I, xiii; IV, xii; *OC* II, 52, 52, 459); Julie's husband, M. de Wolmar, on the other hand, is a "noble soul" (II, vi; *OC* II, 209). Rousseau used the expression "beautiful souls" as the caption for the seventh illustration in the novel, an engraving which depicts the heroine and her husband welcoming her former lover to their home (*OC* II, 766f.). He calls special attention to the caption, and hence to the expression and to what he means by it, in the second preface to the novel (*OC* II, 13); the term and the notion become important in Romanticism, especially in

German Romanticism. Louis-Dominique Bourguignon, *alias* **Cartouche** Notorious chief of a band of brigands (1693–1721). **Cromwell** Rousseau consistently taxes Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) with being a hypocrite for seeking worldly power in the name of religion (also in *SC* IV 8 [26]).
[55]* **are found together . . . all the other things** These two lines are unaccountably omitted in the Pléiade and the Intégrale editions.
[62]* **the Philosopher I . . . mentioned** D'Alembert, in the *Preliminary Discourse* to the *Encyclopedia*, mentioned at [27]*.
[64] **Solon** (*c.* 639–*c.* 559 BC), the great reformer of the laws of Athens, when asked whether he had given the Athenians the best laws possible, replied "The best they could tolerate": Plutarch, *Solon* XV, 2.
[65] **a great Prince** King Stanislas, to whom these *Observations* are addressed, had founded the Royal Academy of Sciences and Letters of Nancy in the very year of this exchange, 1751.

LETTER TO GRIMM (pages 52–62)

As Rousseau points out in his first sentence, Gautier's refutation appeared in the October 1751 issue of the *Mercure*. Canon Joseph Gautier (d. 1776) is fully identified by the titles he lists at the head of his "Refutation," and by which Rousseau therefore addresses him in this rejoinder. Gautier owed his various positions to the patronage of King Stanislas, who had also only recently established the Academy of Nancy.

It seems likely that Gautier's "Refutation" was planned in conjunction with Stanislas's "Reply." In any event, Rousseau is known to have been working on his rejoinders to both sets of objections at the same time, and it seems reasonable to think of them together. In the *Observations* he had tried to persuade King Stanislas, as he had earlier tried to persuade the Dijon Academy, to adopt a position at odds with their self-interest narrowly construed. Gautier, on the other hand, begins, as Rousseau correctly points out, with some rather fawning references to his royal patron, and he ends with an open appeal to his fellow Academicians' narrow self-interest. This leads Rousseau to draw a sharp contrast, both at the beginning and at the end of the present *Letter*, between himself, the citizen of a free city and the spokesman for its best interests, and Gautier, the member of learned professions and of an Academy under royal patronage and the spokesman for their interests. The *Letter* is thus made to illustrate one of the major themes of the *Discourse* which initially occasioned this exchange.

The ostensible addressee of the *Letter*, Baron Friedrich-Melchior Grimm (1723–1807), belonged to Diderot's circle. At the time of this

writing, he and Rousseau were good friends. Grimm took over the editorship of the *Correspondance littéraire* from Raynal in 1753, and he became an influential figure on the Paris literary and cultural scene. Later he and Rousseau broke, and Rousseau asked his publisher to omit Grimm's name from the title of this letter. The relations with Grimm form a major strand in the story Rousseau tells in the *Confessions.*

This *Letter to Grimm*, dated 1 November 1751, appeared in pamphlet form. It has most recently been edited by Bouchardy in *OC* III, 59–70; and by Launay in the Intégrale, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. II, pp. 100–106, who also reprints Gautier's "Refutation," (pp. 93–99); as does Tente, *Polemik*, pp. 184–202.

The italicized passages throughout Rousseau's text are, again, direct quotations from the text he is discussing.

[3] **the Prosopopeia of Louis the Great** In defense of the arts and sciences which Gautier wrote in imitation and refutation of Rousseau's prosopopeia of Fabricius, *First Discourse* [32].

[6] **our soldiers are not Réaumurs and Fontenelles** Gautier had mentioned Réaumur and Maupertuis; René-Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur (1683–1757), renowned scientist; Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657–1757), for almost half a century the permanent Secretary of the Academy of Sciences, widely influential popularizer of the new science, and vigorous partisan of the moderns; Pierre Louis Moreau de Maupertuis (1698–1759), distinguished mathematician and natural philosopher, became president of the Berlin Academy of Sciences.

[7] **Herodotus, Strabo . . . Tacitus** In contradiction to Rousseau's praise of the Scythians, the early Germans, and the early Persians, Gautier refers to the reports of the Scythians' harsh ways in Herodotus (*c.* 480–*c.* 425 BC), *Histories* IV, 1–143, and in Strabo (63 BC–AD 25), *Geography* VII, 300–303; to the unfavorable description of the early Germans by the Roman geographer Pomponius-Mela (first century AD); and to the revulsion at the Persians' harems and their tolerance of incest expressed by Charles Rollin (1661–1741) in his widely read and translated *Histoire ancienne*, Bk. IV, ch. 4, art. iv. Rousseau, on the other hand, had referred to Xenophon (*c.* 430–*c.* 340 BC), at *First Discourse* [22], [51]**, and to Tacitus (AD *c.* 55–120) at *First Discourse* [22].

[11] **the Kalmuks**, nomadic Mongol tribes of western China, the **Bedouins**, nomadic Arab tribes of the North African and Near Eastern deserts, and the **Kaffirs** South African race belonging to the Bantu family.

[15] **"We readily inquire . . . *what blockheads*!"** Montaigne, "On Pedantry," *Essays* I, 25 (Montaigne, *OC* 135, tr. 100); Rousseau reversed the order of Montaigne's text, which begins "Call out . . ."

[17] **a passage in Plato** *Phaedrus* 274c–275c, cp. *First Discourse* [36]; **Ozymandias** Legendary king of Egypt, presumably Rameses II, who ruled from about 1300 to 1232 BC. In his *Refutation*, Gautier refers to Diodorus of Sicily's (first century BC) report (*Hist.* I, 1, 49) that Ozymandias had built the first public library, and had inscribed on its portal "Remedies for the Soul's Ills"; the episode is also recounted in Diderot's *Encyclopedia* article "Bibliothèque."
[21] **Carneades** Gautier refers to the famous episode when the Greek philosopher Carneades (214/219–129 BC), founder of the Third or New Academy, while in Rome on an embassy, publicly argued in support of natural right one day, and just as vigorously argued against it the next day; to the elder Cato's indignation at this display, and to his sharp condemnation of Greek philosophy; and to the fact that in his old age that same Cato studied Greek in order to read Plato's dialogue on the immortality of the soul, the *Phaedo*, in the original.
[25] **the Stoics . . . in my camp** In the passage just quoted by Rousseau, Gautier had spoken of "*stoic sternness*."
[28] ***truth . . . to the bottom of a well*** *First Discourse* [37] and Editorial Note.
[29] **I notice that M. Gautier** Rousseau omitted this paragraph in some editions of this text.
[33] ***The victories of the Athenians over . . . even the Lacedaemonians*** Reading *même* as Gautier had written, rather than *mêmes* as both the *OC* and the Intégrale (Launay) editions do. **what I said about the defeat of Xerxes . . . outcome of the Peloponnesian War** Xerxes, king of Persia (485–465 BC), whose attempted invasion of Greece was finally repulsed at Salamis in 480 BC. In the *First Discourse*, Rousseau had said that by this time the Persians had become corrupted, whereas the Athenians were corrupted by the arts and sciences in the course of the subsequent century; and within seventy-five years, in 405 BC, the Peloponnesian War ended with the defeat of Athens by Sparta. ***funds intended for the war are used*** Reading *destinés* and *employés*, as Gautier had written and the sense demands, instead of erroneously repeating *destinés* as both the *OC* and the Intégrale (Launay) editions do.
[38] **the Utrecht Gazette . . . account of M. Gautier's Work** This indeed most laudatory page about Gautier's *Refutation* is reproduced in Tente, *Polemik*, pp. 204f. As Rousseau points out in his *Last Reply* [74]*, Gautier wrote an answer to the present *Letter*.

LAST REPLY (pages 63–85)

This *Reply* was occasioned by a lengthy *Discourse on the Benefits of the Sciences and Arts* by M. Bordes, initially read before the Academy of

Lyon in June 1751, printed in the December issue of the *Mercure*, and published in pamphlet form in the spring of the following year. Charles Bordes (1711–1781) and Rousseau had been friends some ten years earlier, when Rousseau lived in Lyon. At the time, Rousseau addressed two verse Epistles to Bordes (*OC* II, 1130–1133), and he recalls that period at the beginning of Book VII of the *Confessions*. In the next Book, he refers briefly to the present exchange with Bordes and to Bordes's later animus toward him (*OC* I, 280–281, 366).

The *Last Reply* has most recently been edited by Bouchardy in *OC*, III, 71–96; and by Launay in the Intégrale *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. II, pp. 141–1153, who also reprints Bordes's *Discourse* (pp. 134–141); as does Tente, *Polemik*, pp. 303–323.

Italicized passages throughout the *Last Reply* are, again, Rousseau's citations from the text he is discussing.

Let us appear to remain silent not *Ne, dum tacemus, non verecundiae sed diffidentiae causa tacere videamur*: St. Cyprian (*c.* 210–258), *Against Demetrianus*.

[4]* **the famous Philosopher** Montesquieu, arguing against slavery based on contempt for alien ways, *Of the Spirit of the Laws* XV, 3. **A king of Lacedaemon** The episode is told by Plutarch in his *Of Envy and Hatred* V, as well as in his *Life of Lycurgus* V, 9.

[5]* **It cost Socrates** Meletus brought charges against him in the name of the poets, Anytus in the name of the artisans and the politicians, and Lycon in the name of the orators (Plato, *Apology of Socrates* 23e–24a). Just as in his paraphrase of the *Apology* in the *First Discourse* Rousseau had made no mention of Socrates's criticism of the political men, so here he omits to mention that charges were brought against him in their name. **when I asserted that Socrates would not have had to drink the hemlock** *First Discourse* [33].

[12]* **memorable examples of continence** Plutarch, in his essay *On Curiosity* (XIII), tells how Cyrus of Persia (*c.* 585–529 BC) and Alexander the Great (356–323 BC) both chose not to behold women of great beauty lest they be distracted by their charms. Elsewhere he concludes an account of the conduct of the Elder – not the Younger – Scipio (*c.* 236–184 BC) on conquering the Spanish city of New Carthage. "But one thing, above all the rest, chiefly increased his praise, and won him great love and good-will, as a mirror and example of all virtue. There was a young lady taken prisoner, that in beauty excelled all the women in Carthage: whom he carefully caused to be kept, and preserved from violence and dishonour. And afterwards, when he knew that she was married unto Lucceius, Prince of the Celtibarians, he sent for her husband that was a very young man, and delivered her unto him,

untouched or dishonoured. Luccius, not forgetting his noble courtesy unto her, did let all his subjects understand the great bounty, modesty, and excellency of all kinds of virtues that were in this Roman general: and shortly after he returned again to the Roman's camp with a great number of horsemen" (*Life of Scipio Africanus*, North tr.). An ancient **shield** in the French Royal Collection at the Louvre known as "Scipio's Shield" had, according to tradition, been given to Scipio on that occasion (Delaruelle, "Les Sources principales de J.-J. Rousseau," p. 248, n. 3). **Falises was conquered . . . Pyrrhus driven from** Pyrrhus defeated the Romans in two successive campaigns (280 and 279 BC), inflicting – but also sustaining – great losses. The Romans were ready to continue to do battle regardless of the cost to them. Pyrrhus could not do so, and therefore had to abandon his Italian campaign; hence the expression "Pyrrhic victory." **the Poet Dryden** John Dryden (1631–1700).

[16] **abandoned to *the faculties of instinct*** The expression is Bordes's, in a passage which Rousseau quotes in this *Reply* [40].

[35] **Caryatids** Classical columns in the form of draped female figures.

[38] **Did not Ochus shine . . . Atlas . . . Zoroaster . . . Zamolxis** Religious innovators, although Ochus or Artaxerxes III, king of Persia (358–338 BC), seems out of place in this list. **Philosophy . . . among the Barbarians** Cp. Plato, *Republic* VI, 499c. *Miltiades* led the victorious Athenians against the Persians in the battle of Marathon, in 490 BC. *Themistocles* (*c.* 523–459 BC) fortified Piraeus, the port of Athens, and persuaded Athens to build up its navy; he later led the victorious Greeks against the Persians in the battle of Salamis, in 480 BC (Herodotus, *Histories* VII, 144; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian Wars* I, 14; Plutarch's *Life of Themistocles* IV). *Aristides*, surnamed the Just, fought at Marathon and at Salamis, and led the Athenians in the final decisive battle against the Persians at Plataea in 479 BC. Two years later he achieved leadership of the Maritime Confederacy in Athens; the laws which he drew up for that confederacy were regarded as exemplary. **Socrates's** dates are 469–399 BC; **Plato's** are 429–347 BC.

[40] **Cicero's eloquence . . . his zeal** Cicero was consul in 63 BC, when Catiline's conspiracy was discovered. He exposed and prosecuted the conspirators, and his speeches on the occasion are models of civic oratory.

[42] **the foresight of that boor Themistocles** See Editorial Note to [38]; **who did not know how to play the flute** A taunt to which he replied, "But give me a small, weak and unknown city, and I will make it great, strong, and renowned": Plutarch, *Themistocles* II, 4; *Cimon* IX, 1.

[46] **Thermopylae** The mountain pass held by Spartan King Leonidas against the vastly superior invading Persian forces. When he learned

that he had been betrayed, he dismissed all allies and, with only three hundred of his countrymen, fought the advancing enemy to the death in 480 BC (Herodotus, *Histories* VII, 202–226).

[46]* **Pericles** (495–429 BC), political leader of Athens during what is often called the city's Golden Age. Rousseau's doubts about his political leadership echo those raised by Plato and, less directly, by Thucydides. **Alcibiades** (450–404 BC), the brilliant and flamboyant public figure, had advised the Athenians to launch the ruinous Sicilian expedition. Thucydides, in his account of the episode, leaves open the possibility, as Rousseau does here, that Alcibiades might have brought that expedition to a successful conclusion (*Peloponnesian Wars* VI, XV).

[47] **the Ephors** The five overseers elected annually in Sparta, and who exercised great authority in all of the city's affairs.

[49] **Tiberius** (42 BC–AD 37), Emperor of Rome (AD 14–37) known for his suspicious and cruel nature. **Catherine de Medici** (1519–1589), cruel Regent of France, largely responsible for the Saint Bartholomew Massacre of Protestants (1572).

[49]* **It is not Rousseau ... it is Montaigne** in "Of the Younger Cato," *Essays* I, 37 (Montaigne, *OC* 226, tr. 170).

[49]** **Curius, refusing the presents** Curius Dentatus defeated the Samnites in his first consulship, in 290 BC, and Pyrrhus in his second consulship in 275 BC.

[51] ***Cato ... the model of the purest virtue*** Marcus Porcius Cato (95–46 BC), surnamed Utican, great-grandson of Cato the Censor, on whom he modeled himself. He was an adherent of the Stoic sect. He had consistently opposed Caesar's ambitions, and when Caesar's armies prevailed, Cato chose to take his life rather than survive the Republic. He soon became a legendary hero of Republicanism. See Seneca, *Letters to Lucillus* XCV, 59–71; his *On Providence*, from which Rousseau quotes in the next paragraph; and especially Plutarch's *Life of Cato*. Rousseau calls Cato "the greatest of men" in the *Second Discourse* II [57], and in the *Letter to d'Alembert* (p. 38; tr. p. 29); in the *Discourse on Political Economy* [30] (*SC* tr. and *OC* III, 255), and in the *Discourse on Heroic Virtue* [38] above, he compares and contrasts Cato with Socrates.

[52] **Behold a spectacle** ... *Ecce spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat, intentus operi suo, Deus. Ecce par Deo dignum, vir fortes cum mala fortuna compositus. Non video, inquam, quid habeat in terris Jupiter pulchrius, si convertere animum velit, quam ut spectet Catonem, jam partibus non semel fractis, nihilominus inter ruinas publicas erectum.* Seneca, *On Providence* II.

[53] ***Brutus*** Lucius Junius Brutus, leader of the revolt that rid Rome of the Tarquins (510 BC) and established the Republic. ***Decius*** Mus, Publius, Roman consul in 340 BC, dedicated himself to the gods of the

underworld for the sake of victory by the Roman armies. ***Lucretia***, wife of Lucius Collatinus, committed suicide after being raped by Sextus Tarquinius. The ensuing outrage led to the overthrow of the Tarquins in the insurrection led by Lucius Junius Brutus (Plutarch, *Life of Publius Valerius Publicola*, near the beginning). In 1754 Rousseau began a play, "The Death of Lucretia." L. ***Virginius*** slew his daughter to save her from being enslaved by the tyrannical Decemvir Appius Claudius; the public outrage against the Decemvirs expressed itself in an uprising which restored the Republic (449 BC); on the Decemvirs, see also *SC* III 18 [4]. **Scaevola** or "the left-handed," the name given to C. Mucius. When the Etruscan King Porsena marched against Rome to restore the Tarquins to the throne (507 BC), C. Mucius tried to kill him. Caught in the attempt and threatened with torture, he plunged his right hand into a bed of live coals to show his indifference to pain. Early in his *Confessions* Rousseau recalls how, when he was a child, he got so carried away while telling the story of Scaevola that he walked over to a brazier, ready to reenact the scene he was recounting (*OC* I, 9).

[54] . . . **the case our century finds most revolting** . . . The sons of Brutus, Titus and Tiberinus, having conspired to restore the Tarquins, were condemned by Brutus to death. Machiavelli justifies Brutus's action very differently: "Whoever seizes a tyranny and does not kill Brutus, and whoever makes a state free and does not kill Brutus's sons, maintains himself a short time": *Discourses* III, 3; cp. I, 16.

[57] **Philip's ventures** Philip (382–336 BC), king of Macedonia, gradually conquered the Greek cities on the Macedonian coast and eventually defeated an alliance led by Athens at the Battle of Chaeroneia in 338 BC, thereby putting an end to the independence of Greece.

[57]* **Titus** Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus, emperor of Rome (AD 79–81). **"As a private person . . ."** *Privatus atque etiam sub patre principe, ne odio quidem, nedum vituperatione publica caruit. At illi ea fama pro bono cessit, conversaque est in maximas laudes.* Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars* I, vii.

[61] **Cortés** Hernando Cortés led the Spanish conquest of Mexico 1519–1521. **Guatimozin** The Aztec chief defeated by Cortés and executed on his orders; the story of his proud bearing was widely known; see e.g. Voltaire, *Essai sur les moeurs* ch. 147 (near the end); Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopedia*, "Mexico"; Raynal, *Philosophical and Political History*, Bk. VI, ch. 9.

[64] **It would appear, we are told** Rousseau is here quoting a sentence in which Bordes is quoting a sentence from *First Discourse* [57].

[65] **Hébert** A jeweler who supplied the Court at the time of this writing. **Lafrenaye** A painter. **Dulac** Unidentified. **Martin** The name of two renowned cabinetmakers (Bouchardy, in *OC* III, 1278).
[66] ***A good mind needs little learning*** *Paucis est opus litteris ad mentem bonam* (Seneca, *Moral Letters* CVI, near the end).
[67] ***We are told to mourn the education of the Persians*** See *First Discourse* [22] and [51]**, and references. ***Be he Trojan or Rutulian*** *Tros Rotulusve fuat* (Vergil, *Aeneid* X, 108).
[69] ***can delude only informed minds.*** **I don't know how to reply** Rousseau pretends not to realize that *informed* is a misprint for *uninformed* in Bordes's text.
[71] **Melon** Jean-François Melon (1680–1738), author of an *Essai politique sur le commerce* (2nd enlarged edition, 1734), and of an "Apology of Luxury." In addition to his defense of luxury, that is to say of a public policy favoring the pursuit of material well-being and affluence unhampered by moral restraints or sumptuary laws, Melon strongly defended slavery on economic grounds.
[74]* **I am told that M. Gautier** Cp. *Letter to Grimm* [38].

LETTER ABOUT A NEW REFUTATION (pages 86–91)

The *Refutation* that occasioned this *Letter* appeared in late 1751. As Rousseau indicates, it was published together with a reprint of the *Discourse*: typically each page of the book is divided into two columns, the left reproducing Rousseau's text, the right bearing the author's point-by-point criticism; an addendum goes on to take issue with Rousseau's *Observations*. According to its title page, this *Refutation* was the work of a member of the Dijon Academy who had voted against awarding the prize to Rousseau's entry; but in a statement published in the August 1752 issue of the *Mercure de France*, the Academy categorically denied that the *Refutation* was by one of its own. This prompted Claude-Nicolas Lecat, surgeon in Rouen, the Perpetual Secretary of that city's Academy and a member of numerous other learned societies, to acknowledge that he was the author of the *Refutation*, and to attempt to justify the fact that he had published it as he had.

Rousseau's *Letter* has been reedited most recently by Bouchardy in *OC* III, 97–102; and by Launay in the Intégrale *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. III, pp. 173–176, which also reprints Lecat's *Refutation*, the Dijon Academy denial of his membership in that Academy, and Lecat's acknowledgment of his authorship, although it unfortunately does so with unacknowledged omissions (pp. 153–173, 176–180). The relevant

texts are reprinted in their integrity by Tente, *Polemik*, pp. 210–288, 399f., 402–411.
[5] **the French Academy Prize this year** The topic for the Academy's 1752 competition in eloquence was: "The Love of Letters Inspires the Love of Virtue." Rousseau remarks on the choice of this topic in *Observations* [12]*.
[8] Jean de **La Fontaine** (1621–1695), **Nicolas Boileau** (1636–1711), **Molière** (1622–1673), Vincent **Voiture** (1598–1648), Jean François **Regnard** (1655–1709), Jean Baptiste Louis **Gresset** (1709–1777) are writers Lecat had mentioned. He had further spoken of **Nimrod** as a tyrant and a criminal (cp. *Genesis* 10:8–10), and said that any time thirty **Picardy Peasants** gather for a dance, they will fight more than will any five hundred people at a ball, adding, "if you have a farm or a piece of land in those parts of the country, you could not expect much profit."
[9] **drawn from Clenard a term used by Cicero** Lecat suggests that the term "investigation," which was unfamiliar in French before its occurrence in the *First Discourse* [38], had been adapted by Rousseau from a Latin expression to be found in the *Primer* by Nicolas Clenard, professor at the University of Louvain. As Rousseau correctly points out, the Latin *investigatio* may be found in Cicero's *On Duties* (I, iv, 13; vi, 19).
[9]* **The Lyon Discourse . . . my reply** Bordes's *Discourse* and Rousseau's so-called *Last Reply* in response to it, above.
[9]** **"why should I be denied?"**

> *Ego cur, acquirere pauca*
> *Si possum, invideor; cum lingua Catonis et Enni*
> *Sermonen Patrium ditaverit?*
>
> Horace, *On the Art of Poetry* 55–57

[10] **what their shoulders can carry**

> *quid valeant humeri*
>
> Horace, *On the Art of Poetry*, 40

[11] **I had said** In *First Discourse* [8]; Rousseau has changed the original wording slightly. **Lulle's pretentious doctrine** Raymond Lulle (1235–1315), the Catalan polymath, claimed to have devised an "art of finding truth" by means of a formal classification of all being and knowledge.
[12] **The following wise lesson formulated by a Philosopher**, namely Rousseau himself in *Method for a Book* [9].

PREFACE TO *NARCISSUS* (pages 92–106)

Rousseau wrote this *Preface* in the winter of 1752–1753, and published it soon thereafter together with the text of the *Narcissus*, or *The Self-Lover*.

Narcissus is the earliest of several plays he wrote or sketched as a young man (*Conf.* III, *OC* I, 120). None of them was performed at the time. In 1742 or 1743 he showed the *Narcissus* to the great playwright Marivaux (1688–1763), who "touched it up" (*Conf.* VII, *OC* I, 287). Rousseau continued, in later years, to write at least fragments of plays, tales and allegories, and musical entertainments. He composed his best known opera, *Le Devin du village* or *The Village Soothsayer*, early in 1752, at a time when the public debate about the *First Discourse* was still very intense. It was performed before the Court to considerable acclaim in October of that year. The King wanted to reward Rousseau with a pension. Rousseau declined it by not appearing at the ceremony at which it was to be awarded him. The reasons for his action were many and complex, but the fear that, as the beneficiary of royal favors, he might no longer feel perfectly free to speak his mind on the most important issues, or that others might impugn his motives for what he said or did, certainly played an important part in his decision. He had long ago decided to live free and poor, and he remained faithful to that resolve. Diderot and others of his friends remonstrated with him for it (*Conf.* VIII, *OC* I, 374–381).

In the wake of the success enjoyed by the *Devin du village*, the youthful *Narcissus* was brought out of its drawer and produced. The premiere took place on 18 December 1752. Although he apparently did not think much of the play, Rousseau rightly judged the *Preface* which he now wrote for it to be one of his better writings, adding that in it "I began to reveal my principles a little more than I had done up to that time" (*Conf.* VIII, *OC* I, 388). In the immediate sequel he goes on to say that he developed these principles fully in his next major writing, the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, the theme for which was announced that very year, 1753.

This *Preface* is Rousseau's last major published contribution to the controversy most immediately aroused by the *First Discourse*. His next major public statements on the issues which he had first raised in that *Discourse* are the *Letter to d'Alembert* (1758), and the "Prefaces" to the *Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761).

The standard contemporary edition of the *Preface* is that by Jacques Scherer, in *OC* II, 959–974.

[1] **I wrote this Play at the age of eighteen** He wrote it in his early twenties: "I lied by a few years" (*Conf.* III, *OC* I, 120).

[2] **convince . . .persuade** Rousseau draws the distinction throughout his work; it is briefly discussed in the editor's Introduction, p. xxi above; for references to other occurrences of the formula, see the Editorial Note to *Voltaire* [30].
[3]* **the four German sermons of which one begins** paraphrases almost without parody the beginning of a speech by Johann Friedrich Burscher delivered in 1752 "in defense of learning and the fine arts, against M. Rousseau of Geneva" on the occasion of the birthday of the King of Saxony. For the full text of this and the other speeches delivered on that occasion, see Tente, *Polemik*, pp. 458–547.
[3]** **In the *Mercure* for August 1752** See the introductory Editorial Note to the *Letter about a New Refutation*, p. 343 above.
[9] ***enough glibness, not enough wisdom*** *Satis loquentiae, sapientae parum.* According to the Roman grammarian Aulius Gellius (*c.* 165–123 BC), this is how the grammarian Valerius Probus understood Sallust's (86–34 BC) remark (in *The Catiline Conspiracy* v, 4) "enough eloquence, too little wisdom," *satis eloquentiae, sapientiae parum* (*Attic Nights* I, 15, 18). I am indebted to my colleague Professor Michael Roberts for this reference. Hobbes quotes Sallust's remark correctly in *De cive* XII, 12 and *Elements of Law*, II, 8 § xiii.
[15]* ***The Villain*** The play *Le Méchant* by the former Jesuit Jean Baptiste Louis Gresset, written in 1745 and first performed in 1747.
[20] **the absurd systems of such men as Leucippus** Leucippus (fl. 450–420 BC) originated the atomic theory. **Diogenes** Called The Cynic (fourth century BC), he was notorious for the extremes to which he went in leading a life of utter independence. **Pyrrho** of Elis (*c.* 365–*c.* 275 BC) was the founder of skepticism. **Protagoras** of Abdera (*c.* 480–411 BC), the most famous and successful of the Sophists, is best remembered for his dictum "man is the measure of all things." T. **Lucretius** Carus (99–55 BC), the distinguished Roman follower of the materialist and hedonist Epicurus, and author of the majestic didactic poem *On the Nature of Things.* Thomas **Hobbes** (1588–1679), the great English political philosopher whose teaching has frequently been taken to be strictly materialist and atheist. Bernard **Mandeville** (1670–1733), author of *The Fable of the Bees*, subtitled *Private Vices, Publick Benefits.*
[23]* **Here is a modern example . . . The Republic of Genoa** More precisely, the Corsican Academy, or Academy of Bastia, was restored in 1749 by the Marquis de Cursay, commanding general of the French troops charged with pacifying Corsica on behalf of Genoa, and he manifestly did try to revive the Academy for the very reasons Rousseau here mentions. Rousseau wrote his *Discourse on Heroic Virtue* for the Corsican Academy's 1751 Prize Essay Competition.

[24] **"if science, trying to arm us . . . seek cover behind it"** Montaigne, "Of Physiognomy," *Essays* III, 12 (Montaigne, *OC* 1016, tr. 795). The adjective "vain" in the last line was added by Rousseau.
[30]* ***He is not moved by the people's fasces . . .***

> *Illum non populi fasces, non purpura Regum*
> *Flexit, et infidos agitans discordia fratres;*
> *Non res Romanae, perituraque regna. Neque ille*
> *Aut doluit miserans inopem, aut invidit habenti.*

Vergil, *Georgics* 495f., 498f.

[32] **He is born to act and to think, not to reflect.** In a striking passage of his next major writing, Rousseau will say "If [nature] destined us to be healthy then, I almost dare assert, the state of reflection is a state against Nature, and the man who meditates is a depraved animal" (*Second Discourse* I [9]).
[34]* **the two first Kings of Rome** Romulus and Numa. "The name *Rome* which purportedly comes from *Romulus* is Greek, and means force; the name *Numa* is also Greek, and means *Law*. How likely is it that the first two Kings of that city should have borne in advance names so appropriate to what they did?" (*SC* IV 4 [1]*).
[39] **I needed a test** The *Devin du village* had been very successful, and Rousseau later described his feelings of pleasure at its first performance; yet the next day he refused the offer of a royal pension. He may well have exaggerated the lack of success of the *Narcissus* in order to dramatize his equanimity in the face of failure as much as of success.

SECOND LETTER TO BORDES (pages 107–110)

Bordes was not satisfied with Rousseau's *Last Reply*, and set to work on a renewed, more elaborate criticism of the argument of the *First Discourse*. When Rousseau heard of this project, he wrote his old friend a cordial letter assuring him that their differences of opinion did not alter his fond memories of him, and adding, rather flatteringly, that Bordes was the only one of his critics he took seriously. But he also warned him that he might once again choose to reply in public (May 1753, *CC* II, 218, no. 197). However, after reading Bordes's second rejoinder, he judged it much inferior to the first (*CC* II, 231f., no. 203), and never went beyond drafting the present *Preface* of a reply to it. Besides, by November of 1753 his thoughts and energies became absorbed by what was to become his second *Discourse*.

Bordes read his own *Second Discourse on the Benefits of the Sciences and the Arts* before the Lyon Academy in August 1752; it was published

in August 1753. By then, Rousseau's *Preface to "Narcissus"* had appeared, and Bordes appended some comments on it to his own text.

This *Preface* of a second letter to Bordes remained unpublished during Rousseau's lifetime. It was first published in *Oeuvres et correspondance inédites de J.-J. Rousseau*, edited by M. G. Streckeisen-Moultou and Jules Levallois (Michel Lévy fils, Paris, 1861), pp. 317–322. It is reprinted with notes by Bouchardy in *OC* III, 103–107; and by Launay in the Intégrale *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. II, pp. 190–192; the full text of Bordes's *Second Discourse* is reprinted in Tente, *Polemik*, pp. 623–681.

[1] **I do not see why** Reading *je ne vois pas* with the Intégrale (Launay) edition and as the sense requires, instead of *je revois pas* with *OC*.

[4] **[my duty] is to tell . . . the truth or what I take to be the truth** Cp. *Last Reply* [73]; in this spirit, Rousseau took as his motto the phrase *vitam impendere vero*, "to dedicate life to truth"; he discusses this motto most fully in the fourth of the *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*. He always stressed that not everyone has "the sad task of telling people the truth." Emile, for example, explicitly does not (*Emile* V; *OC* IV, 859, tr. 474).

[5] **my portrait** Maurice Quentin Latour's elegant and frequently reproduced pastel of Rousseau first shown at the summer *Salon* of 1753.

[6] **This sad and great System** Rousseau had referred to his "system" for the first time in the *Preface to "Narcissus"* [13]. It is his only published reference to it. He now refers to it five times in the course of this brief draft. He may have been prompted to do so by the beginning of the Bordes text to which he is here replying: "I had looked upon M. Rousseau's first Discourse as nothing more than a clever paradox, and that was the tone in which I answered him. His last reply has revealed a settled system . . ."

[7] **most men, degenerated from their primitive goodness** Rousseau had first referred to man's natural goodness in his *Last Reply* [37]*, also addressed to Bordes; he develops this central theme of his thought most fully in the *Second Discourse*, and in the *Emile*.

SECOND DISCOURSE (pages 111–222)

In his *Confessions*, immediately after remarking that in the *Preface to "Narcissus"* he had revealed his principles more fully than in any of his previous writings, Rousseau goes on to say: "I soon had the opportunity to unfold them fully in a work of the utmost importance; for it was, I believe, in that same year of 1753 that the program of the Academy of Dijon about the origin of inequality among men was published.

I was struck by this great question, and surprised that the Academy had dared to propose it. But since it had had the courage to do so, I could surely have the courage to address it, and that is what I undertook to do." To collect his thoughts, he spent a week walking in the forest of Saint Germain, seeking and finding "the image of the first times." "These meditations resulted in the *Discourse on Inequality*, a work more to Diderot's taste than any of my other writings, and for which his advice was more useful to me, but which in all of Europe found only a very few readers who understood it, and of these none wished to talk about it. It had been written to compete for the prize, so I entered it, convinced though I was in advance that it would not receive it, and well aware that it is not for pieces cut from such cloth that Academy prizes are endowed" (*Conf.* VIII; *OC* I, 388f.).

In the event he was proved right. The jury did not even read the *Discourse* in its entirety, "because of its length, and its bad tradition, etc."

The topic had been announced in the November 1753 issue of the *Mercure de France*; Rousseau left Paris on 1 June 1754, with the *Discourse* completed, except for the Epistle Dedicatory which he judged it more prudent to sign and date on soil not under either French or Genevan jurisdiction (*Conf.* VIII; *OC* I, 392). Official permission for the book to be sold in France was granted in May 1755.

The circumstances surrounding the 1754 Dijon Academy competition are related, and all but one of the other essays submitted for it are reprinted, in Roger Tisserand, *Les Concurrents de J. J. Rousseau à l'Académie de Dijon pour le prix de 1754* (Boivin & Cie., Paris, 1936); the previously missing essay has been published by Ch. Porset, "Discours d'un anonyme sur l'inégalité, 1754," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (1979), 182:7–27.

Jean Morel's pioneering "Recherches sur les sources du Discours de J. J. Rousseau sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes," in *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1909), 5:119–198 (reprinted Lausanne, 1910) remains valuable.

The most important recent editions of the *Discourse* are: C. E. Vaughan, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Political Writings*, 2 vols. (CUP, Cambridge, 1915; reprinted by Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1962), vol. I, pp. 124–220; Jean Starobinski's critical edition (1964) in *OC* III, 109–223; reprinted with corrections in the Collection "Folio" (Gallimard, Paris, 1989); Heinrich Meier, *Diskurs über die Ungleichheit/Discours sur l'inégalité, kritische Ausgabe des integralen Textes, mit sämtlichen Fragmenten und ergänzenden Materialien nach den Originalausgaben und den Handschriften neu ediert, übersetzt und kommentiert* (second, revised and

expanded edition, Schöningh, Munich, 1990; third, revised edition, Schöningh, Vienna and Zurich, 1993; page references are to the second edition).

Rousseau's own corrections and additions were first published in the posthumous (1782) edition by Paul Moultou and Paul Du Peyrou of the *Collection complète des oeuvres de Jean Jacques Rousseau* (Geneva). In 1988 the Musée Jean Jacques Rousseau of Montmorency acquired a copy of the *Discourse* which had been extensively annotated by Rousseau himself. So many of these corrections and additions were incorporated in the 1782 edition that some scholars plausibly suspect that this is the very copy of the *Discourse* which the editors of that edition used. This new find is described in full detail by the Museum's Curator, Robert Thiery, in "Histoire, description et analyse du *Discours sur l'Inégalité* acquis par le musée," *Etudes Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1990), 4:231–261; it is also described in Meier's second edition.

Fragments and drafts of the *Discourse* were first published by Streckeisen-Moultou in *Oeuvres et correspondance inédites de J.-J. Rousseau* (1861); they were edited anew and added to by R. A. Leigh, "Les Manuscrits disparus de Jean-Jacques Rousseau," *Annales Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1956–1958), 34:39–81, see especially pp. 67–77; reprinted in *OC* III, 224f., 1356–1358; reedited by Meier, *Diskurs/Discours*, pp. 386–395, 404–411. Other fragments, first published by M. Launay, *Revue internationale de philosophie* (1967), 82:423–428, and reprinted in his Intégrale edition of Rousseau, *Oeuvres complètes*, II, pp. 264–267, have also most recently been reedited by Meier, *Diskurs/Discours*, pp. 396–403.

While the present translation is based on the *OC* version of the 1755 text, every known later addition or correction has been carefully considered, and most of them have been either incorporated into the translation, or recorded in the critical apparatus. However, we have decided against restoring Rousseau's singular numbering of his Notes. To do so would make for a text inconsistent with the entire modern secondary literature, and hence deprive it of much of its usefulness. The problem of the numbering of the Notes will be discussed in the Editorial Note about Rousseau's Notes (p. 370 below).

The paragraph numbering respects Rousseau's division of the text; in these notes the various sections in the *Second Discourse* are indicated by the following abbreviations:

Epistle Dedicatory	ED
Preface	P
Exordium	E
Part I	I
Part II	II
Rousseau's Notes	N

E.g. P [5] refers to para. 5 of the Preface, and N IX [13] to para. 13 of Rousseau's Note IX.

Discourse See the Editorial Note on the title of the *First Discourse*, p. 321.

Origin and . . . Foundations For a discussion of the title, see Introduction, above, pp. xvf.

Jean Jacques Rousseau, Citizen Unlike the *First Discourse*, this *Discourse* gives both the author's name and his political identity. It was by now a very famous name; and by the time this *Discourse* was published, Rousseau had been restored to full citizenship.

What is natural The epigraph is given in Latin: *Non in depravatis, sed in his quae bene secundum naturam se habent, considerandum est quid sit naturale* (Aristotle, *Politics* I, 5, 1254a, 36–38). The reference to "Bk. 2" on the title page appears to have been a typographical error, and was corrected in the 1782 edition. The passage is drawn from Aristotle's discussion of natural slavery or, more generally, of natural inequality; it was also cited by Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) in his discussion of the two methods by which to establish natural right: from the nature of man, or *a priori*; and from the view held "by all, or at least the most civilized Nations," or *a posteriori*. Grotius chooses the second method, citing this text of Aristotle's among others in support of his choice (Grotius, *The Right of War and Peace*, first [Latin] edition, 1625, vol. I, I, § xii; first edition of Barbeyrac's annotated French translation, 1724; all references to this work in the following notes shall be to the English translation [London, 1738], which includes "All the large Notes of Mr. J. Barbeyrac"); Rousseau, citing the same Aristotle text, chooses the first method; as did Hobbes, *De cive* II, 1; see *SC* I 2 [4]–[8], together with the Editorial Notes about the analytic method; *Method for a Book* [6], [10]; *On War* [13]; and V. Gourevitch, "Rousseau's Pure State of Nature," *Interpretation* (1988), 16:23–59, pp. 57–59.

TO THE REPUBLIC Rousseau as well as the Genevan authorities were fully aware of how unusual it was to dedicate a book to a city. Rousseau acknowledges as much in the opening sentence of this Epistle Dedicatory, and he wrote a long letter to Perdriau to justify his action (28 November 1754, *CC* III, 55–60, no. 258). The *Petit Conseil*, Geneva's ruling body, formally accepted the dedication in June 1755 (*CC* III, 132–134, nos. 299, 300, 301). Geneva had been repeatedly torn by civil strife between the party of the Citizens and the ruling Patriciate during the preceding half century. The disturbances of 1737, in particular, left an indelible impression on Rousseau (*Conf.* V, *OC* I, 215f), and one of the aims of this Epistle Dedicatory was to urge the parties to work for a deeper and more lasting reconciliation (to Perdriau, 28 November 1754, *CC* III, 55–60).

MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED, AND SOVEREIGN LORDS The proper form of address to the citizen body sitting in Council (see *Letters from the Mountain* II, 7; *OC* III, 813f.).

ED [5] **one national . . . another foreign Chief** I.e. the Papacy.

ED [6] **freedom is like the solid and hearty foods . . .** Cp. *Poland* 6 [6]. **the Tarquins' oppression** The Tarquins were overthrown, and the first Roman Republic established, in 508 BC.

ED [15] **laws lose their vigor** The 1782 edition reads "their rigor."

ED [16] **MAGNIFICENT AND MOST HONORED LORDS** The Magistrates are not sovereign; Rousseau reserves the title "magistrate" for the officers charged with carrying out the sovereign will: *SC* III, 1.

ED [18] **the Citizens and even the mere residents** The *Citoyens* or Citizens and the *bourgeois* or burghers together made up the sovereign *Conseil Général* or General Council; two hundred of its members were chosen to make up the *Grand Conseil* or Greater Council; and of these, twenty-five were in turn chosen for life to make up the *Petit Conseil* or Lesser Council; the *habitants*, or residents, were resident aliens.

P [1] **inscription on the Temple at Delphi** "Know Thyself," and "Everything within Measure"; Rousseau is manifestly thinking of the first. Samuel Pufendorf (1632–1694), *Le Droit de la nature et des gens* (*Right of Nature and of Nations*; first [Latin] edition, 1672; first edition of Barbeyrac's French translation, 1706) cites the inscription (II, 4, § v), and a few lines later quotes the lines from Perseus with which Rousseau closes this Preface. In the following notes, all references to Pufendorf's work, translated into French from the original Latin and copiously annotated by Jean Barbeyrac, are to the second "revised and considerably enlarged" edition, published in Amsterdam in 1712, cited hereafter as *Droit*; all references to Pufendorf's own summary of his major work, *Les Devoirs de l'homme et du citoyen* (1673), will be to the excellent translation by Michael Silverthorne, *The Duties of Man and Citizen* (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, 1991), cited hereafter as *Man and Citizen*. **the statue of Glaucus** The fisherman who became a sea god, traditionally depicted in painting and sculpture encrusted with barnacles and covered with seaweed (see Plato, *Republic* X, 611d).

P [3] **Physical causes introduced . . . varieties** Rousseau is following Buffon (1707–1788), almost half of whose volume *De la nature de l'homme* (1749; *On the Nature of Man*) – from which he had quoted in Note II, at the beginning of the Preface – surveys the "varieties" of man by summarizing a large body of ethnological literature. Varieties are characterized, Buffon holds, by differences in color, form, shape, and temperament or *naturel*; they are caused by differences in climate,

in diet, and in morals or ways of life, that is to say by the "physical causes" Rousseau mentions; and since these varieties result from the steady impact of such general, external causes, varieties may be expected to undergo changes or to disappear with time and changing circumstances (*De la nature de l'homme*, edited by Michèle Duchet as *De l'homme* [Maspero, Paris, 1971], pp. 223, 270f., 319–321; see also Buffon, *Oeuvres philosophiques*, edited by Jean Piveteau [PUF, Paris, 1954], p. 313, cited hereafter as Buffon, *OP*).

All early editions read: "introduced in some species the varieties"; the 1782 edition reads "in some animals the varieties."

P [4] **a state which . . . perhaps never did exist** Namely the state of men living free of whatever is artificial or conventional, or of what Rousseau also calls the "moral" in contrast to the "physical" aspects of life; see Introduction, p. 000 above. However, the state of nature in the general sense of that expression, the state of men who are not members of one and the same political society, certainly does, did, and will continue to exist.

P [5] **says M. Burlamaqui** Rousseau is here quoting from the *Principes du droit naturel* (1747), I, 1, ii, by Jean-Jacques Burlamaqui (1694–1748), Professor of Natural and Civil Law at the Academy of Geneva. The proposition that the principles of natural right must be derived from man's nature goes back at least as far as Plato's analogy, in the *Republic*, between the city and the soul; in one form or another, this proposition remains universally accepted among Rousseau's contemporaries, e.g. Pufendorf, *Droit*, II, 3, § xiv with Barbeyrac's note *ad loc.*, and Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws*, I, 2.

P [6] **natural Law** See the Introduction to *SC* tr. **the Roman Jurists** I.e. Ulpian (d. AD 228), *Digests* I, 1, and Justinian (483–565), *Institutes* I, 2, § i, as reported for example in Grotius, *Right* I, 1, § xi; in Pufendorf, *Droit* II, 3, §§ ii *et seq.*, with Barbeyrac's notes and his Preface, p. cxiv; in Richard Cumberland, *De legibus naturae* (London, 1672; translated by Jean Barbeyrac as *Traité philosophique des loix naturelles* [Amsterdam, 1744] and cited in Barbeyrac's translation hereafter as *Loix*), V, § 2. **The Moderns** I.e. Grotius: "Natural Right is the Rule and Dictate of Right Reason, showing the Moral Deformity or Moral Necessity there is in any Act, according to its Suitableness or Unsuitableness to a reasonable and Sociable Nature," *Right* I, 1, § x; note that "and Sociable" is Barbeyrac's addition; see also Pufendorf, *Droit* II, 3, § xiii; and Cumberland, *Loix* IV, § 4, among others. This use of "right reason" can be traced to Cicero, *De republica* III, 22; it is criticized by Hobbes, *De cive* II, 1; and see Editorial Note to I [35] below. **So that . . . it is impossible to understand the Law of Nature Rousseau**

tends to be careful about distinguishing between "law of nature" and "natural law," for the reason which he indicates two paragraphs below.

P [9] **prior to reason . . . without . . . sociability** Cp. Grotius's definition of natural right cited in the preceding note. Sociability or sociality becomes central to Pufendorf's natural right doctrine; see especially *Droit* II, 3, § XV and *Man and Citizen* I, 3, §§ viii *et seq.* Sometimes "sociability" means no more than fellow-feeling; however tradition also distinguishes different forms or kinds of society – e.g. the family, the household, and political or civil society, to which sometimes is added the whole of mankind. In reading Rousseau or his contemporaries one therefore has to ask oneself in which of its various senses "society," and hence "social" and "sociable," is being used in any given case; and in particular whether it is or is not interchangeable with "political" in the sense in which Aristotle, for example, speaks of man as a "political animal," namely, as inclined to and perfected in and by political society. The article "Social" in Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopedia* notes that the term is a neologism. **any being like ourselves** *Nos semblables* would normally be rendered "our fellows" or "fellow-human beings"; but since the status of fellow-feeling is deliberately problematic, especially in Part I of this *Discourse*, it seemed more faithful to Rousseau's intention to avoid all allusions to it wherever he himself is clearly at pains to avoid them.

P [12] **Learn what the God . . .**

Quem te Deus esse
Jussit, et humana qua parte locatus es in re, Disce.

Perseus (AD 34–62), *Satires* III, 71–73

E [2] **two sorts of inequality** The distinction is drawn by Pufendorf, *Man and Citizen* I, 7, § ii, and developed by Barbeyrac in Pufendorf, *Droit* III, 2, § ii, n. 3; see, further, the Introduction, pp. xvf. above.

E [5] **The Philosophers . . . state of Nature** All the philosophers who have examined the foundations of society, i.e. of political or civil society, have indeed inquired into the condition of men outside of, and especially prior to, political or civil society. But for the most part they did not call that condition "state of nature." The expression was to all intents and purposes introduced by Hobbes: "the state of men without civill society (which state we may properly call the state of nature)" (*De cive* tr., Preface, p. 34). It may thus refer to (1) men in a prepolitical or precivil – and hence un-civilized or "savage" – state. But, at least formally, it also refers to (2) the state of men we would call civilized, living outside their own or even any civil society, either (i) because they live as strangers who are not subject to a common superior on

earth, or (ii) because they are wise and therefore not in need of a common superior; (3) the state of men in political societies that have "dissolved" or been destroyed: e.g. Locke, *Treatises* II, 19, § 211, and this *Discourse* II [56]; or, finally, (4) the state of political societies in their relations with one another: e.g. this *Discourse* II [34]. Even if "state of nature" is primarily used as Rousseau for the most part uses it, to refer to (1), men in the prepolitical state, the expression is not entirely univocal. For Rousseau distinguishes at least three stages in the state of nature so understood. **Some ... ascribe ... the Just and the Unjust** For instance Burlamaqui speaks of men's "moral instinct," "the natural tendency or inclination that leads us to approve some things as good and praiseworthy; and to condemn others as bad and blameworthy; independently of any reflection. Or if one wishes to denominate this instinct 'moral sense' as does one Scottish scholar – Mr. Hutcheson – then I would say that it is a faculty of our soul which in certain cases immediately discerns moral good and evil by a kind of sensation and taste, independently of reasoning and reflection" (*Principes du droit naturel* II, 3, § i); accordingly he also speaks of an innate "sentiment or taste of virtue and of justice which in a sense anticipates reason" (*ib.* II, 3, § iv). **Others ... Natural Right to keep what belongs to him** For instance, Locke speaks of men being naturally in a state of perfect freedom to "dispose of their possessions ... as they think fit" (*Treatises* II, 2, § 4, cp. § 6). **Others ... the stronger authority over the weaker** E.g. Hobbes: "in the naturall state of men ... a sure and irresistible power confers the right of dominion and ruling over those that cannot resist" (*De cive* I, 14); or Spinoza, "the greater devour the lesser by sovereign natural right (*summo naturali jure*)" (*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* ch. 16). **the Writings of Moses** Moses is traditionally held to have written down the first five books of the Bible, or Pentateuch. **pure state of Nature, unless they relapsed into it** About the "paradox" of such a relapse, see *Origin of Languages* 9 [15], and most fully, V. Gourevitch, "Rousseau's 'Pure' State of Nature," *Interpretation* (1988), 16:23–59, especially pp. 47–49.

E [6] **hypothetical and conditional reasonings ... comparable to those our Physicists** For example, Descartes, explaining how "certain considerations" – i.e. the condemnation of Galileo – kept him from publishing his cosmology, remarks that "in order to shade these things somewhat and to be able to say more freely what I thought regarding them without having to follow or to refute the opinions of the learned, I even resolved to leave the whole of this world to their disputes, and to speak only of what would happen in a new world if somewhere, in imaginary spaces, God now created enough matter to compose it, and

variously and without order shook the various parts of this matter in such a way as to compose as confused a chaos as the poets might feign, and that afterwards he did nothing but to lend nature his ordinary assistance, and let it act according to the laws he had established": *Discourse on Method* v (Gilson edn.), 41f. See also Buffon's statement cited in the Editorial Note to this *Second Discourse*, N II [2]. **God himself . . . immediately after the creation** The last four words were added in 1782. **the Lyceum** Where Plato's former student, Aristotle, taught; **Xenocrates** of Chalcedon (396–314 BC), disciple of Plato, and eventually head of Plato's Academy.

I [1] **Aristotle thinks . . . claws** There is no known source for such a claim; however, in his *Reply* to the naturalist Charles-George Le Roy, Rousseau himself adopts a view reminiscent of the view he here attributes to Aristotle. **assume him always conformed as I see him** Cp.: "But because I did not yet have enough knowledge of them [i.e. of animals and especially of men] to speak about them in the same manner as about the rest [of the universe], namely by proving effects from causes, and by showing from what seeds and in what manner nature must produce them, I contented myself with assuming that God formed the body of a man exactly similar to one of ours in both the external conformation of its limbs and the internal conformation of its organs . . . ." Descartes, *Discourse on Method* v (Gilson edn.), 45f.

I [3] **imitate their industry** *Industrie* also means, as "industry" used to, activity, enterprise, industriousness.

I [4] **Nature . . . as the Law of Sparta** which ordered that defective children be exposed. On nature's allowing only the fit to survive, see *Languages* 10 [2], and *Emile*, *OC* IV, 259f., tr. 147. On our societies' causing children to be killed before birth, and hence indiscriminately, cp. also *Second Discourse* N IX [5].

I [5] **gather all his machines** In the 1782 edition, this became "gather all these machines."

I [6] **Hobbes contends** "All men in the State of nature have a desire, and will to hurt . . ." (*De cive* I, 4); "this natural proclivity of men, to hurt each other, which they derive from their Passions, but chiefly from a vain esteeme of themselves" (*ib.*, I, 12). **An illustrious philosopher** Montesquieu, according to whom man in the state of nature "would at first feel only his weakness; his timidity would be extreme: and if the point required empirical confirmation, savage men have been found in forests; everything makes them tremble, everything makes them flee" (*Spirit of Laws* I, 2). Richard **Cumberland** held that fear would incline men to peace more than to war: *Loix*, I, § 32, 33. **Pufendorf** A man abandoned to his own resources and living as Rousseau has so far

described original man living would be reduced to "trembling at the least noise, at the first sight of another Animal" (*Droit* II, 1, VIII); "afraid at the least object, and filled with wonder at the sight of even the sun" (*Droit* II, 2, II).

I [7] **These are undoubtedly** The entire paragraph was added in 1782. François Corréal (1648–1708), *Voyages de François Corréal aux Indes Occidentales*; Rousseau cites almost word for word from the new, revised, corrected, enlarged edition in two volumes (Paris, 1722), I, 8.

I [9] **If . . . [Nature] destined us to be healthy then, I almost dare assert, the state of reflection is a state against Nature** Striking as it is, this famous remark is rather guarded: "if," "almost"; in connection with this remark, also consider *Preface to "Narcissus"* [32], as well as Buffon's remark, "This power of reflection has been denied to animals" (*Histoire naturelle* IV [1753]; see Buffon, *OP*, pp. 332 b 42 and 336 a 21). The wording of the last clause, **the man who meditates is a depraved animal**, echoes – and the thought challenges – the passage from Aristotle which serves as the epigraph of this *Discourse*. **the opinion of Plato** In the *Republic* III, 405d–408c; cp. Homer, *Iliad* XI, 637–642; IV, 215–219. **Podalirius and Machaon** The sons of the "flawless healer" Asclepius, and themselves good healers (*Iliad* II, 731f.). **And Celsus reports** Added in 1782; A. Cornelius Celsus (*c.* 30 BC–AD 30) remarks that dietetics became a third branch of medicine at the time of Hippocrates, i.e. about 300 BC (*De medicina*, Pref. 3–5).

I [11] **The Horse . . . the Bull . . . Domesticated . . . bastardizing** Buffon, once again, using the same examples, contrasts domestic and wild or savage (*sauvages*) animals in the strongest language: "Man changes the natural state of animals by forcing them to obey him, and making them serve his ends; a domestic animal is a slave with which one amuses oneself, which one uses, abuses, adulterates, displaces and denatures, while the wild animal, obeying only Nature, knows no other laws than those of need and of freedom" (*Histoire naturelle* IV, Buffon, *OP*, p. 351 a 1–9). Rousseau's very next sentence, **As he becomes sociable and a Slave**, would seem further to echo Buffon's text.

I [12] **in cold Countries . . . appropriate the skins of the Beasts** "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin, and clothed them" (*Genesis* 3:21). Barbeyrac, after quoting this verse, comments, "that is to say, in the style of the Hebrews, that he taught them how to do so"; in Pufendorf, *Droit* II, 2, II, n. 5.

I [12]* **There may be a few exceptions . . . serving the same purpose** Note added in 1782. The marsupial described by Corréal and Laët is the opossum. Jan Laët (1593–1649), Dutch geographer, and influential early polygenist; his account of the West Indies appeared in

Latin in 1633, and in a French translation, *L'Histoire du Nouveau Monde ou description des Indes Occidentales* (Leyden, 1640).

I [14] **Physical ... Metaphysical and Moral** The "metaphysical side" here refers to the traditional differentiae of man which Rousseau briefly reviews reason or understanding, and freedom. The "moral side" refers to man as a moral agent, but also, more generally, to needs, passions or feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and conduct in relation to others.

I [15] **or to disturb it** Added in 1782.

I [16] **Some Philosophers** In particular Montaigne, in "Of the Inequality That is Between Us," *Essays* I, 42 (Montaigne, *OC* 250, tr. 189). Although he may, for rhetorical effect, raise questions about whether the difference between a given man and another is not greater than that between a given man and a beast, Rousseau rejected the underlying philosophical or scientific premise that there is no clear distinction between man and beast: see the early and important letter to de Conzié, 17 January 1742 (*CC* I, 134, no. 43) and this *Second Discourse*, Note X [11].

I [17] ***perfectibility*** Rousseau coined, or at least gave currency to, the term on this occasion **inhabitant of the Banks of the Orinoco** The practice is reported by Corréal, *Voyages* I, 260f.; Rousseau refers to it again in *Emile* I, *OC* IV, 254, tr. 43; Buffon also calls attention to it in *De la nature de l'homme* (Duchet edition, p. 299).

I [20] **the Sands and Rocks of Attica ... the fertile Banks of the Eurotas** Athens and Sparta.

I [21] **the sentiment of its present existence** Rousseau will mention this sentiment twice again in the *Second Discourse*: II [2] and [57]. The expression was not uncommon, and Buffon had distinguished at length between what he called a sentiment of one's existence, which he allowed that beasts have, and a consciousness of one's existence, which he attributed to man alone ("Discourse on the Nature of Animals," *Histoire naturelle* IV, Buffon *OP*, pp. 328 b 48–333 a 23, cp. 309 b 40f, 322 a 44f.). However, as Rousseau's third and final mention of the sentiment of one's own existence in the present *Discourse* indicates, he comes to endow this sentiment with far greater significance than had his predecessors; it is also central to his argument – his theodicy, really – in the *Letter to Voltaire* [10] and to his last discussion of happiness in the fifth of the *Rêveries* (*OC* I, 1045–1047, tr. 68f.). For the contrast between "existing" and "living," see *Emile* (*OC* IV, 489, tr. 211), and *Rêveries* X (*OC* I, 1099, tr. 141); and cp. the third of the *Letters to Malesherbes* (*OC* I, 1138).

I [25] **the perplexities regarding the origin of Languages** Rousseau knew that insofar as the "perplexities" which he here canvasses arise

from an attempt to account for how a being without speech might acquire – discover, devise, or invent – language, they simply cannot be resolved. Such perplexities do not arise in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* because in that *Essay* he positions himself inside language, so to speak, and attempts to account for the differences between one language or family of languages and another. Etienne Bonnot, **Abbé de Condillac** (1714–1780), and Rousseau had known each other since 1742, when Rousseau was a tutor in the house of Condillac's brother, M. de Mably. They grew close some years later in Paris; at a much later date, Rousseau entrusted him with a copy of his *Dialogues*. Condillac was a Lockean, but held that Locke had failed to recognize the full extent to which what he calls "signs" (and, in particular, language) are the middle term between sensations and ideas, as well as between one idea and another. Accordingly he devoted half of his first published work, the *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* (1746), to the origin, the growth, and the analysis of language. The *Essay* enjoyed great success. Condillac went on to write extensively on almost all aspects of philosophy. In his speculations about the origin of language, he assumes two children lost or abandoned in a desert place, at first emitting some "natural signs," and gradually associating conventional meanings with these signs; as they grow up and have children of their own, their stock of conventional signs – gestures as well as sounds – gradually grows (*Essay* pt. II, ch. 1, §§ 1–7; cp. Herodotus, *Histories* II, 2–6). As Rousseau says, Condillac assumes "some sort of society already established among the inventors of language."

I [28] **present infinitive** "Present" added in 1782.

I [30] **general ideas can enter the Mind only with the help of words, and the understanding grasps them only by means of propositions. That is one of the reasons why animals could not form such ideas, nor ever acquire the perfectibility that depends on them.** There is no basis for the claim that Rousseau is here saying that perfectibility as such, rather than just a particular perfectibility, depends on language. **general ideas** "Words become general by being made the signs of general ideas; and ideas become general by separating from them the circumstances of time, and place, and any other ideas, that may determine them to this or that particular existence." John Locke (1632–1704), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690; hereafter *Essay*), III, 3, VI; "the having of general ideas, is that which puts a perfect distinction betwixt man and brutes," *ib.*, II, 11, X; cp. III, 11, XVI; and regarding the general idea of a triangle, see IV, 7, IX. Rousseau appears also to have been acquainted with Bishop Berkeley's criticism of these views, possibly through the *Dialogues*,

which were by this time available in a French translation. **archetype** Locke, *Essay*, see especially II, 30, 31; III, *passim*; IV, 4, V, vii, viii. Condillac, in contrast to Locke, restricts "archetype" to standards for human action or conduct (*Essay* pt. I, ch 3, §§ 5, 15; pt. I, ch. 5, § 12; pt. II, sec. 2, ch. 2, § 26). See also Malebranche, *Recherche de la vérité* (*Search for Truth*) 2, 3, 6.

I [33] **we are repeatedly told that nothing would have been as miserable as man** Literally: Pufendorf, *Droit* II, I, § viii and VII, I, § vi; *Man and Citizen* II, 5, § ii; Burlamaqui, *Droit naturel* I, 4, § 4; but also, of course, the most famous such remark, "And the life of man solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. xiii); cp. *De cive* I, 13; also Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, ch. V (near the middle).

I [35] **Hobbes very clearly saw the defect of all modern definitions of Natural right** Namely that they define it in terms of man's being rational and sociable – in the sense of political. **his own definition** "the Dictate of right reason,* conversant about those things which are either to be done, or omitted for the constant preservation of Life, and members as much as in us lyes"; where, however, "*By Right Reason in the naturall state of men, I understand not, as many doe, an infallible faculty, but the act of reasoning, that is, the peculiar and true ratiocination of every man concerning those actions of his which may either redound to the dammage, or benefit of his neighbours" (*De cive* II, I); and even more bluntly: ". . . commonly they that call for right reason to decide any controversy, do mean their own. But this is certain, seeing right reason is not existent, the reason of some man, or men, must supply the place thereof . . .", *Elements of Law*, II, 10, § viii. **A wicked man is, he says** "Unlesse you give Children all they aske for, they are peevish, and cry, aye and strike their Parents sometimes, and all this they have from nature, yet are they free from guilt, neither may we properly call them wicked; first, because they cannot hurt; next, because wanting the free use of reason they are exempted from all duty; these when they come to riper yeares, having acquired power whereby they may doe hurt, if they shall continue to doe the same things, then truly they both begin to be, and are properly accounted wicked; In so much as a wicked man is almost the same thing with a childe growne strong and sturdy, or a man of a childish disposition; and malice the same with a defect of reason in that age, when nature ought to be better governed through good education and experience. Unlesse therefore we will say that men are naturally evill, because they receive not their education and use of reason from nature, we must needs acknowledge that men may derive desire, feare, anger,

and other passions from nature, and yet not impute the evill effects of those unto nature. The foundation therefore which I have laid standing firme, I demonstrate in the first place, that the state of men without civill society (which state we may properly call the state of nature) is nothing else but a mere warre of all against all; and in that warre all men have equal right unto all things; Next, that all men as soone as they arrive to understanding of this hateful condition, do desire (even nature it selfe compelling them) to be freed from this misery. But that this cannot be done except by compact, they all quit that right they have to all things" (*De cive*, Preface to the Reader, pp. 33f.; see also I, 10, 11, 12). Rousseau criticizes this passage from the "Preface" again in *Emile* I, *OC* IV, 288, tr. 67. **so much more** *Tanto plus in illis proficit vitiorum ignoratio, quam in his cognitio virtutis.* Justin (second century AD) is speaking about the Scythians' ignorance of virtue and the Greeks' knowledge of it (*Histories* II, 2, 15); also quoted by Grotius, *Right* II, 2, II (I), n. 6; and by Pufendorf, *Droit* II, 3, VII, n. 5. **the author of the *Fable of the Bees*** Bernard de Mandeville (1670–1733); in the context of a discussion of charity he writes: "This virtue is often counterfeited by a passion of ours called pity or compassion, which consists in a fellow-feeling and condolence for the misfortunes and calamities of others: all mankind are more or less affected with it; but the weakest minds generally the most. It is raised in us when the sufferings and misery of other creatures make so forcible an impression upon us, as to make us uneasy ... Should any one of us be lock'd up in a groundroom, where, in a yard joining to it there was a thriving good humour'd child at play, of two or three years old, so near us, that through the grates of the window we could almost touch it with our hand; and if, whilst we took delight in the harmless diversion, and imperfect prittle-prattle of the innocent babe, a nasty over-grown sow should come in upon the child, set it a screaming, and frighten it out of its wits; it is natural to think that this would make us uneasy, and that with crying out, and making all the menacing noise we could, we should endeavour to drive the sow away. But if this should happen to be an half-starved creature, that, mad with hunger, went roaming about in quest of food, and we should behold the ravenous brute, in spite of our cries, and all the threatening gestures we could think of, actually lay hold of the helpless infant, destroy and devour it; to see her widely open her destructive jaws, and the poor lamb beat down with greedy haste; to look on the defenceless posture of tender limbs, first trampled on, then tore asunder; to see the filthy snout digging in the yet living intrails, suck up the soaking blood, and now and then to hear the crackling of the bones, and the cruel animal with savage pleasure, grunt over

the horrid banquet; to hear and see all this, what tortures would it give the soul beyond expression! Let me see the most shining virtue the moralists have to boast of, so manifest either to the person possessed of it, or those who behold his actions; let me see courage, or the love of one's country, so apparent without any mixture, clear'd and distinct from all other passions. There would be no need of virtue or self-denial to be mov'd to such a scene; and not only a man of humanity, of good morals and commiseration, but likewise an highwayman, an house-breaker, or a murderer, could feel anxieties on such an occasion; how calamitous soever a man's circumstances might be, he would forget his misfortunes for the time, and the most troublesome passion would give way to pity, and not one of the species has a heart so obdurate or engaged, that it would not ake at such a fight, as no language has an epithet to fit it." "An Essay on Charity and Charity-Schools" (3rd and 4th paragraphs), *The Fable of the Bees* (1714), edited by F. B. Kaye (Clarendon, Oxford, 1924), vol. I, pp. 254–256.

I [36] **like bloodthirsty Sulla** ... ***tender-hearted*** This was added in 1782. Lucius Cornelius Sulla (139–78 BC), Roman general who became a notoriously cruel tyrant (Plutarch, *Life of Sulla* XXX, 4). **Alexander of Pherae**, as told in Montaigne, "Cowardice, Mother of Cruelty" (*Essays* II, 27; Montaigne, *OC* 671, tr. 523f.), drawn from Plutarch (*Pelopidas*, XXIX, 9–11). Rousseau makes the same point with the same examples in the *Letter to d'Alembert* (*OC* V, 23; Fuchs edition, p. 32; tr. pp. 24f.), which is quoted in the Editorial Note to *Languages* I [10]*. **When nature gave man tears** ...

> *Molissima corda*
> *Humano generi dare se Natura fatetur*
> *Quae lacrymas dedit.*
>
> Juvenal, *Satires* XV, 131–133

I [37] **Even if ... commiseration ... puts us in the place of him who suffers** "Pity is often a sentiment of our own ills in the ills of another," La Rochefoucauld, *Maxims*, no. 264; and "Sweet it is, when on the great sea the winds are buffeting the waters, to gaze from the land on another's great struggles; not because it is a pleasure or joy that anyone should be distressed, but because it is sweet to perceive from what misfortune you yourself are free": Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, II, 1–4 (translated by C. Bailey); cp. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II, 8, 1385b 13–19; Hobbes, *De homine* (1658), XII, 10, and *Leviathan* ch. VI; also see *Languages* 9 [2].

I [42] **the moral from the Physical in ... love** The distinction is drawn by Buffon, who sets all the agreeable aspects of love on the

physical and animal side, all its evils on the moral side ("Discourse on the Nature of Animals," *Histoire naturelle* IV, Buffon, *OP*, pp. 341 a 5l–b 44); but the distinction is also suggested by Barbeyrac in Pufendorf, *Droit* I, 2, § vi, n. 10 and context, as well as in his discussion of Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus* V (near the beginning), in Pufendorf, *Droit* I, 4, § vii, n. 5. Rousseau discusses the present passage from the *Discourse* in *Emile* V, *OC* IV, 796f, tr. pp. 429f.; regarding the "moral" side of love, see also *Emile* IV, *OC* IV, 493f, tr. 214; and, especially, the whole of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*. **the sex that should obey** According to *Genesis* 3:16. In a striking early fragment, Rousseau wrote: "Let us begin by considering women deprived of their freedom by the tyranny of men, and men the masters of everything ... everything in their hands, they seized it by I know not what natural right which I could never quite understand, and which may well have no other foundation than main force" (*OC* II, 1254). **a taste which he could not have acquired** In 1782 this reads "a distaste which he could not have acquired."

I [51] **have remained in his primitive condition** In 1782, this reads "primitive constitution."

II [5] **must naturally have engendered** In 1782, this reads "must naturally engender."

II [9] **a Deer ... a hare** an echo of Locke, *Treatises* II, § 30.

II [10] **various Savage Nations have now** In 1782, this reads "Savage Nations have today." **I cover multitudes** In 1782, a new paragraph begins here.

II [11] **a first revolution** Cp. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, V, 1011–1017; on **families** and **fixed dwellings**, cp. Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws* XVIII, 13; on the beginning of this new period or stage, see also *Languages* 9 [35].

II [14] **speech is imperceptibly established** In 1782, this reads "speech was imperceptibly established." **Great floods ... Revolutions of the Globe** Cp. *Languages* 9 [27], [31], [32], and *Fragments politiques*, *OC* III, 533; Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, V, 380–415; in his *Histoire et théorie de la terre* (1749), Buffon speaks of the especially frequent early revolutions the earth must have undergone (Buffon, *OP*, pp. 49–55).

II [17] **Locke "... no property ... no injury"** What Locke had said is: "Where there is no property, there is no injustice, is a proposition as certain as any demonstration in Euclid" (*Essay* IV, 3, § 18); De Coste's French translation reads "Where there is no property, there can be no injustice"; which Barbeyrac quotes and discusses in his preface to Pufendorf, *Droit* (p. xx). By substituting "injury" for "injustice,"

Rousseau substitutes the more for the less comprehensive term; "[the brute beasts] cannot distinguish between *injury* and *harme*; Thence it happens that as long as it is well with them, they blame not their fellowes: But those men are of most trouble to the Republique, who have most leasure to be idle: for they use not to contend for publique places before they have gotten the victory over hunger, and cold." Hobbes, *De cive* v, v; see *ib.* I, x, note; similarly, Pufendorf refers to all voluntary hurt as "injury or wrong" [*injure ou tort*], *Droit* I, 7, §§ xiii–xvii, and see *ib.* II, 3, § iii, esp. Barbeyrac's note 10; on harm and injury, see also this *Discourse* I [39].

II [18] **the genuine youth of the World** Lucretius speaks of the "youth of the world" to describe the first state of the world and of man (*On the Nature of Things* V, 780, 818, 943, cp. 330); Rousseau borrows the expression, but thinks it correctly describes a later state in the history of man and the world.

II [20] **For the Poet it is gold and silver** Ovid's fourth age, Rousseau's third stage in the state of nature, introduces gold as well as iron, together with *amor sceleratus habendi*, "evil concupiscence" (*Metamorphoses* I, 127–150); cp. Locke, *Treatises* II, 8, § 111; Rousseau's account of this stage culminates with another Ovidian indictment of gold (*Second Discourse* II [29]). **both [metallurgy and agriculture] were unknown to the Savages of America** Thus, too, Locke, *Essay* IV, 12, § 11.

II [21] **It is very difficult to conjecture how men came to know and to use iron** in direct contradiction to Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* V, 1281f.

II [24] **to render to each his own** A traditional formula for justice: Ulpian, *Digests* I, 1; Justinian, *Institutes* I, 1; it may be traced to Simonides (556–468 BC) in Plato, *Republic* I, 331e; see also *Republic* IV, 433e–434a. **nascent property . . . manual labor** The remark echoes and fully agrees with Locke: "The *Labour* of his Body and the *work* of his Hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *Labour* with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property*" (*Treatises* II, 5, § 27); on the origin of property, see also *Emile* II, *OC* IV, 330–333, tr. 98f. **the Ancients, says Grotius** In *Right* II, 2, § 2 (5), quoting Servius's (fl. *c.* AD 400) commentary on Vergil (*Aeneid* IV, 58). Pufendorf quotes the same text, *Droit* IV, 4, § xiii. **Ceres** The Romans' goddess of the fruits of the earth.

II [27] **instills in all men** In 1782, this reads "instill."

II [29] ***Shocked by the novelty . . .***

Attonitus novitate mali, divesque miserque
Effugere optat opes, et quae modo voverat, odit.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XI, 127f.

The poet whom Rousseau had cited to introduce this stage (II [20] above) is now cited to mark its climax with his description of King Midas's condition upon being granted his wish to have everything he touches turn to gold. The passage is also quoted by Montaigne, "Apology of Raymond Sebond" (*Essays* II, 12, Montaigne, *OC* 560, tr. 434).

II [33] **in a few great Cosmopolitan Souls** In the copy of the *Discourse* which Rousseau gave his English friend and host Richard Davenport, and which is now in The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, he by hand changed the remainder of this sentence to read: "worthy of crossing the imaginary barriers that separate Peoples, and embracing the whole of mankind in their benevolence on the model of the supreme being that created it." See the Introduction to *SC* tr.

II [35] **I know . . . other origins to Political Societies . . . conquests by the more powerful** Possibly Hobbes, *De cive* VIII, 1, or Barbeyrac in Pufendorf, *Droit* VII, 1, § vii, note 1. **or the union of the weak** E.g. Glaucon in Plato, *Republic* II, 358e–359a, or d'Alembert, *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia*.

II [36] **begin by purging the threshing floor** Cp. *Luke* 3:17. **as Lycurgus did in Sparta** "The second law that Lycurgus made, and the boldest and hardest he ever took in hand, was the making of a new division of their lands. For he saw so great a disorder and unequality among the inhabitants, as well of the country, as of the city Lacedaemon, by reason some (and the greatest number of them) were so poor, that they had not a handful of ground, and other some being least in number were very rich, that had all: he thought with himself to banish out of the city all insolency, envy, covetousness, and deliciousness, and also all riches and poverty, which he took the greatest, and the most continual plagues of a city, or common-weal." Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* VIII, 1–3, translated by North; see also *SC* II 7 [5], II 8 [4], and III 10 [3]*.

II [37] **protect their goods, their freedoms and their lives** The remark echoes Locke's assertion that men unite "for the mutual *Preservation* of their Lives, Liberties, and Estates" (*Treatises* II, 9, § 123, and especially 15, § 171). ***If we have a Prince*** Pliny the Younger (61–*c.* 113), *Panegyric of Trajan* LV, 7.

II [38] **Politicians . . . Philosophers** In the Montmorency copy of the *Discourse*, Rousseau changed this to read "Our Politicians . . . our Philosophers," which is also how it appears in the 1782 edition; "Politicians" here translates *politiques*, about which see the Note on the

Translations, p. li above. **Brasidas to a Satrap** Rousseau attributes to the Spartan general Brasidas (d. 422 BC) the answer which Herodotus (*Histories* VII, 133–136) attributes to the Spartans Sperchias and Bulis when the Persian Satrap Hydarnes asked them why they did not choose to become subjects of the King of Persia (Starobinski); Rousseau tells the story somewhat differently in his *Considerations on the Government of Poland* 3 [2].

II [39] ***they call … servitude peace*** *Miserrimam servitutem pacem appellant*; Rousseau took this very slightly paraphrased citation from Tacitus's *Histories* (IV, 17) from Algernon Sidney's (1622–1683) *Discourses Concerning Government* (II, 15, 3) (Starobinski).

II [40] **Paternal authority … absolute Government** E.g. Sir Robert Filmer (1588–1653), *Patriarcha* (1640, publ. 1680); Jacques Bénigne, Bishop Bossuet (1627–1704), *Politique tirée des propres paroles de l'Ecriture Sainte* (*Politics Drawn From the Very Words of Holy Scripture*, edited by Patrick Riley, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, 1991) II, I, prop. 3. **Locke's or Sidney's proofs** Locke's *First Treatise of Government* (1680/1681, publ. 1689/1690) and Algernon Sidney's *Discourses Concerning Government* (1683, publ. 1698) are both detailed criticisms of Filmer. On paternal and political authority, see also *Pol. Ec.* [2]–[6], *SC* I 2 [1]–[3]. **Despotism** In Rousseau's technical vocabulary, the despot usurps the sovereign power and places himself above the laws, whereas the tyrant usurps the royal or ruling authority and exercises it according to the laws; see *SC* III 10 [10].

II [41] **examine the facts in terms of Right** In contrast to holding that whatever is or happens to be the case is right or just, as Rousseau charges Aristotle and Grotius with doing in respect to slavery (*SC* I 2 [4], [7] *et seq.*); as Locke remarks in the context of a discussion of the same problems which Rousseau is here considering, "an Argument from what has been, to what should of right be, has no great force …" (*Treatises* II, 8, § 103); consider, also, the epigraph to this *Discourse*; and the argument of the *Letter to Philopolis*. **a famous Text published in 1667** Namely the *Traitté des droits de la Reine tres-chrestienne sur divers éstats de la monarchie d'Espagne* (*Treatise Regarding the most Christian Queen's Rights to Various States of the Spanish Monarchy*); in the printing I have consulted (Rob. Phillipes Imprimeur et Marchant, Grenoble, 1667) the passage Rousseau quotes is found on p. 323. The *Traité*, assumed to have been drafted by Antoine Bilain, is an official document spelling out the French Crown's claims to parts of the Catholic Low Countries; it was published on the eve – and in justification – of Louis XIV's War of Devolution against Spain (1667–1668). The

passage Rousseau quotes closely resembles a passage which Sidney had quoted from this same *Traité*: "That kings are under the happy inability to do anything against the laws of their country" (*Discourses Concerning Government* II, 30; edited by Thomas West [Liberty Classics, Indianapolis, 1990], p. 294). Sidney had not given the source of his quote. As Morel long ago pointed out ("Recherches sur les sources du Discours de J. J. Rousseau," pp. 178f.), Barbeyrac calls attention to Sidney's quote, identifies its source and, in the last (1734) edition of his translation of Pufendorf's *Droit* which he himself revised, reproduces the full context from which Sidney had plucked it: *Droit* VII, 6, § x, n. 2. Rousseau evidently drew the passage of the *Traité* which he quotes from this note of Barbeyrac's. (I am indebted to Heinrich Meier for putting me on the track of this important difference between the editions of Barbeyrac's Pufendorf translation.) As a number of previous editors have noted, in context the point of the passage Rousseau quotes is very different from the point Rousseau is making: Rousseau's citation ends with the remark that Princes are subject to the law, whereas the text goes on to say, in the very next sentence, that they are also its authors. **I shall ignore ... *of which one is not master*.** Rousseau added this sentence in the Montmorency copy, and it is included in the 1782 edition. Jean Baptiste **Barbeyrac** (1674–1744), so frequently mentioned in these notes, the French translator and learned annotator of Grotius, Pufendorf, and Cumberland, was a strong partisan of Locke's political teaching. Rousseau is here quoting his comment in Pufendorf, *Droit* VII, 8, § vi, n. 2, based on Locke, *Treatises* II, 4, § 23, and/or II, 15, § 172.

II [42] **Pufendorf says** In his chapter "On the Origin and Foundations of Sovereignty": "For as one transfers one's goods to another by conventions and contracts, so one can, by a voluntary submission, yield to someone who accepts the renunciation, one's right to dispose of one's freedom and natural forces. Thus a man who commits himself to be my slave, genuinely confers on me the Authority to be his Master; and it is crass ignorance to object to this, as some do, the common – and, in other respects, true – maxim, that *one cannot relinquish what one does not have*" (*Droit* VII, 3, § i). **And the Jurists who have gravely pronounced** Both Grotius (*Right* II, 5, § xxix; III, 14, § viii) and Pufendorf (*Droit* VI, 3, § ix; and *Man and Citizen* II, 4, § vi) allow that the child of a slave may be born a slave, although they do so with some qualifications.

II [44] **Without at present entering into** The "common opinion" which Rousseau here briefly summarizes is the so-called double-contract doctrine. By the first contract or convention, independent

individuals agree, each with all the rest, to combine wills and strengths or forces to form a permanent union for the sake of their common security and welfare, and issue an ordinance regarding the form of the government. This much provides "the beginnings and rudiments of a State." By the second contract or convention, this beginning state or people and those it has chosen or accepted to govern it mutually obligate themselves to fulfill their respective responsibilities toward one another. As Pufendorf points out, this second contract is scarcely evident in democracies, where the same persons are at different times or in different respects both sovereign and subject. The primary focus of this doctrine is the second contract, which was seen as a way of placing restrictions on a Hobbesian sovereign (Pufendorf, *Droit* VII, 2, §§ vii–xix and VII, 6, § x; *Man and Citizen* II, 6, §§ vii–ix, adopted by Burlamaqui, *Droit politique* [1751], vol. I, 1, 4, § 15, and, with qualifications, by Diderot in his *Encyclopedia* article "Autorité politique," *Political Writings*, edited by Robert Wokler and John Mason [Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, 1992], pp. 6–11). Absolute rulers and their apologists therefore understandably rejected the "common opinion" of a double contract: in 1752 the *Encyclopedia* came under sharp attack because of the assertion, in the article "Autorité politique," that those who submit to political authority and those upon whom they bestow it explicitly or tacitly enter into a contract. At the same time, absolute rulers and their spokesmen sometimes found it convenient or even necessary to profess the "common opinion" that princes and their subjects are bound by a contract: in 1753, shortly before Rousseau began work on the present *Discourse*, the editors of the *Encyclopedia* defended the article "Autorité politique" by citing the *Traitté des droits de la Reine tres-chrestienne sur divers éstats de la monarchie d'Espagne*: "That the fundamental law of the state establishes a reciprocal and eternal bond between the prince and his descendants on the one hand, and the subjects and their descendants on the other, by means of a kind of contract (*une espèce de contrat*) that commits (*destine*) the sovereign to rule and peoples to obey . . . a solemn commitment they entered into with one another for the sake of mutual assistance" (see Diderot, *Political Writings*, ed. Wokler and Mason, pp. 11f.; cp. *Traité*, *ed. cit.* p. 129). Rousseau may, then, refer to double contract as "the common opinion" because even the most absolute of monarchs publicly professed it. Locke had resorted to the same stratagem as that used by Diderot and d'Alembert, by Sidney, and by Rousseau three paragraphs above, when he cited very similar passages from two speeches James I delivered to Parliament in 1603 and 1609: *Treatises* II, § 200. In quoting the *Traité*, Diderot and d'Alembert had no more

consulted the original than had Rousseau. J. Lough has shown that they found the passage they quote in a *Remonstrance* by the Paris Parlement against the Crown of 9 April 1753: "The 'Encyclopédie' and the Remonstrances of the Paris Parlement," *The Modern Language Review* (1961), 56:393–395; mentioned by Paul Vernière in his edition of Diderot, *Oeuvres politiques* (Garnier Frères, Paris, 1963), p. 7, n. 1. In the immediately following two paragraphs, Rousseau goes on to show that the "common opinion" is untenable because the double contract is unenforceable. He spells out his criticism of it fully and explicitly in *SC* III 16; I 7 [3]; III 1 [6].

II [48] **Gerontes . . . Senate . . .** ***Seigneur*** The root of all three is "elder"; the Spartan Gerontes were the city's supreme legislative council, as the Senate was in Rome. In the present context, *Seigneur* is best translated "Sir"; see also *SC* III 5 [2]. **equals to the Gods and Kings of Kings** As, respectively, the Roman Emperors and the Kings of Persia were called.

II [49] **the progress of inequality** As in the state of nature, so in the civil state, Rousseau distinguishes three stages, separated by "revolutions."

II [50] **Sparta . . . Lycurgus established morals** Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* XIII, 1–4.

II [52] **even without the Government's intervention** Added by Rousseau in the Montmorency copy of the *Discourse*, and in the posthumous 1782 edition.

II [53] **may in future Centuries assume** "future" added in the 1782 edition. ***If you order me***

Pectore si fratris gladium juguloque parentis
Condere me jubeas, gravidaeque in viscera partu
Conjugis, invita peragam tamen omnia dextra.

Lucan (39–65), *Pharsalia* I, 376–378

As quoted and very slightly paraphrased by Sidney, *Discourses* II, 19; see context (Morel).

II [55] ***where honesty offers no hope*** *Cui ex honesto nulla est spes*, in Tacitus, *Annals* V, 3 (Meier); again, as very slightly paraphrased by Sidney in the same chapter of the *Discourses*, II, 19.

II [57] **Diogenes did not find a man** Diogenes the Cynic (fl. 370 BC) went about by day with a lantern, explaining, "I am looking for a man" (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives . . . of . . . Philosophers* VI, 41). **the Stoic's ataraxia** i.e. imperturbability, or repose of soul or mind, more originally and typically the aim of the Epicurean and of the Pyrrhonist wise man (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* X, 136; IX, 107, cp. 108; Cicero,

Academica II, 42, 130); on Pyrrhonist ataraxia see also Montaigne, "Apology of Raymond Sebond" (*Essays* II, 12, Montaigne, *OC* 562, tr. 435f.).

II [58] **that a child command** Montaigne puts these words in the mouth of his "Cannibals": "They said that in the first place they thought it very strange that so many grown men, bearded, armed, and strong, who were around the king . . . should submit to obey a child, and that one of them was not chosen to command instead. Second (they have a way in their language of speaking of men as halves of one another) they had noticed that there were among us men full and gorged with all sorts of good things, and that their other halves were beggars at their doors, emaciated with hunger and poverty; and they thought it strange that these needy halves could endure such an injustice, and did not take the others by the throat, or set fire to their houses": "Of Cannibals," *Essays* I, 31, Montaigne, *OC*, 212f., tr. 159.

Rousseau's Notes

In the editions of the *Discourse* published during Rousseau's lifetime, these Notes were numbered in the following puzzling sequence: (*), (*2.), (*3.), (*a), 4, 5, (*d.), 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, (*b.), 11, 12, 13, (*c.), 14, 15. The familiar consecutive numbering from I to XIX was first introduced in the posthumous 1782 Moultou-Du Peyrou *Collection complète des oeuvres de J.-J. Rousseau*; Meier, *Diskurs/Discours*, pp. lxxxviii, 501; Thiery, "Histoire, Description et Analyse du *Discours*," p. 260; R. A. Leigh has the consecutive numbering begin in 1764: *CC* IV, 426, note (a). Meier has called particular attention to the odd original numbering, and he has rightly stressed that it is not likely to have gone unnoticed by Rousseau, who was extremely punctilious about typography, punctuation, and similar details. Yet he chose not to alter this singular sequence although he could easily have done so. Attentive readers should therefore be aware of it. So far no one has offered a plausible explanation of it. The fact that it is odd of course does not prove that it admits of an explanation, let alone of one that must provide the clue to the *Discourse*'s esoteric teaching.

Rousseau had very pointedly called attention to the importance he attaches to these Notes in a Notice immediately following the Preface (p. 129 above).

N I **Herodotus relates** In *Histories* III, 83; the restriction placed on this privilege was that Otanes and his descendants not transgress the laws of the realm.

N II [2] ***de la Nat[ure] de l'homme*** Buffon's *Of the Nature of Man* (1749), *OP*, p. 293 a, Duchet edition, p. 39. Georges-Louis Leclerc (1707–1788), who early assumed the name Buffon, began publishing his monumental and influential *Natural History* in 1749. The first volume dealt with *The History and Theory of the Earth*. It was immediately censured by the ecclesiastical authorities as "containing principles and maxims not in conformity with those of Religion" (Buffon, *OP*, pp. 106f.). Buffon thereupon issued a public statement, the first article of which reads: "I declare that (1) I had no intention of contradicting the text of Scripture, and I very firmly believe what is related regarding Creation, both with respect to the order of time and to the factual circumstances; and that I renounce everything in my book that pertains to the formation of the earth, and in general everything that might be contrary to the narration of Moses, as I presented my hypothesis about the formation of the planets only as a pure philosophical suggestion" (*OP*, p. 108).

Rousseau's Note II quotes the opening paragraph of the third volume of Buffon's *Natural History, Of the Nature of Man*, a work which in many particulars influenced this *Discourse*. However, Buffon did not agree with all of Rousseau's arguments and conclusions: the *Observations* forwarded to Rousseau in Le Roy's name (pp. 229f. above), were presumably Buffon's own; and in subsequent volumes of the *Natural History* he challenges features of Rousseau's account of the "pure" state of nature (see Editorial Note to *Languages* 9 [32]*, p. 403 below).

N III [1] **the Child found in 1344** The episode is reported by Barbeyrac in Pufendorf, *Droit* II, 2, § ii, n. 1, where he also tells of another feral child found in 1661. **the Child found in 1694** The episode is, as Rousseau says, reported by Condillac, *Essay* I, pt. IV, ch. 2, § 23; Rousseau quotes from that report in Note X [7]. **The little Savage of Hanover Known as "Peter"**; about whom see James Burnett, Lord Montboddo, *Ancient Metaphysics* (London, 1784), III, Bk. II; ch. I; and Joh. Fr. Blumenbach, *The Anthropological Treatises*, translated by Th. Bendyshe (London, 1865), pp. 329–340. **in 1719 two more . . . in the Pyrenees** It is not clear to which cases Rousseau is here referring; see, however, regarding them, F. Tinland, *L'Homme sauvage* (Paris, 1968), pp. 65f.; Tinland also very fully and illuminatingly reviews the known cases of feral children as well as the issues of comparative anatomy which Rousseau raises, especially in the Notes to this *Discourse*. In connection with Rousseau's argument in this Note, it might be pointed out that Linnaeus had classified man as a quadruped; Rousseau, instead, accepts the traditional view that the upright posture

is natural to man: see, for example, Socrates in Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I, 4, ix; and in Plato, *Cratylus* 399 b–c; *Timeaus*, 90 a; and Aristotle in *History of Animals* I, 15, 494a 27–35; *Parts of Animals* IV, 10, 686a 26–35.

N IV [1] **the following passage** Again taken from Buffon: "Preuves de la théorie de la Terre," art. VII, in *Histoire naturelle* (1749), I, 242f.

N IV [2] **Arabia Petraea** The northwestern section of the Arabian peninsula, and extending beyond it to include Sinai.

N V **Dicaearchus** (fl. 300 BC), disciple of Aristotle's. **St. Jerome** (348–420), the Church Father best remembered for his Latin or Vulgate translation of the Bible; the passage from his *Against Jovianus* II, § 13, which Rousseau here cites, is quoted by Barbeyrac in his edition of Grotius's *Right* II, 2, § ii, n. 13 (Morel, "Recherches sur les sources du Discours," p. 161); however, Rousseau omits Dicaearchus's equation of the age of Saturn with the golden age. The sentence immediately following the quote, **This opinion . . .** was added in the 1782 edition. The reference is to **François Corréal**, *Voyage aux Indes Occidentales* I, 2. **the Lucayes** are the Bahamas.

N VI [3] **"The Hottentots," says Kolben** In the digest of his book in the *Histoire des Voyages* (1746–1781), a twenty-volume collection of travelers' reports, begun under the editorship of the Abbé Prévost; P. Kolben's *Description du Cap de Bonne Espérance* (3 vol., Amsterdam, 1741; German original, 1719) is summarized in vol. V; Rousseau is quoting somewhat freely from ch. 3, pp. 155f.

N VI [6] **Father du Tertre** The Dominican Jean-Baptiste du Tertre (1610–1687), *Histoire générale des Isles de Saint Christophe* (Paris, 1654), pt. V, ch. I, § 4.

N VI [7] **In the year 1746, an Indian** The episode is, as Rousseau remarks, reported in Jacques Gautier d'Agoty's (1710–1785) periodical *Observations sur l'histoire naturelle, la physique et la peinture*, published in Paris between 1752 and 1758 (I, 262). The 1782 edition of the *Discourse* has the Indian's proposal addressed to the Government instead of to the Governor.

N VII **"The Life-span of Horses," says M. de Buffon** In *Histoire Naturelle* (1753), IV, 226f.; this volume also contains the important article "Donkey," in which Buffon sets forth his influential definition of "species:" "a constant succession of individuals that are similar [*semblables*] and reproduce" (Buffon, *OP*, p. 756 a 52–54).

N IX [1] **A famous Author** Probably Pierre Moreau de Maupertuis (1698–1759), *Essai de philosophie morale* (Berlin, 1749), ch. 2. In this important Note Rousseau traces some of the connections between the *First* and the *Second Discourses*; and raises many of the issues which he discusses at greater length in the *Letter to Voltaire*, above.

N IX [2] **not a single commercial house . . . dishonest debtor** "Dishonest" added in 1782. **London fire** In 1666, which was said to have destroyed as much as four-fifths of the city; Mandeville makes much the same point, using the London fire and other instances which Rousseau also adduces in this indictment of society ("A Search into the Nature of Society," in *The Fable of the Bees*, edited by Kaye, vol. I, p. 359). **Montaigne blames** "One Man's Profit Is Another's Harm," *Essays* I, 22, Montaigne, *OC* 105, tr. 76f. **Demades** Athenian orator, executed in 319 BC.

N IX [4] **poisonous utensils** Rousseau shared the widely held view that copper pots are noxious; see his the *Letter* he addressed to Raynal, which was published in the *Mercure de France*, July 1753, pp. 5–13 (*CC* II, 221–227, no. 200).

N IX [6] **But are there not** This paragraph and the first sentence of the next paragraph were added in the 1782 edition.

N IX [8] **Realgar** Arsenic monosulfide, a poisonous red-orange pigment used to enhance the color of gold and gilding; see Rousseau's *Institutions chymiques*, in *Annales de la société Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1918/1919) 12:1–164; (1920/1921) 13:1–178, see pp. 166–170.

N IX [14] **What, then? Must Societies be destroyed** Rousseau added this concluding paragraph while the book was in page proof (Letter to his publisher Rey, 23 February 1755, *CC* III, 103, no. 279). **a precept indifferent in itself** In all likelihood refers to the precept or warning not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (*Genesis* 2:17, 3:5, 3:22, 23). Rousseau discusses this precept and the failure to heed it – in other words the Christian Theologians' Fall – in an important note of the *Lettre à M. de Beaumont*, Archbishop of Paris, which he wrote in response to that Prelate's condemnation of the *Emile*: "To demur against a useless and arbitrary prohibition is a natural inclination, but which, far from being in itself vicious, conforms to the order of things and to man's good constitution, since he would be unable to attend to his preservation if he had not a very lively love for himself and for the conservation of all his rights and privileges, as he received them from nature. He who could do anything would wish nothing but what would be useful to him; but a feeble Being, whose power is further limited and restrained by law, loses a part of himself, and in his heart he reclaims what he is being deprived of. To impute this to him as a crime is to impute to him as a crime that he is what he is and not some other being; it would be to wish at one and the same time that he be and not be. For this reason, the command infringed by Adam appears to me to have been not so much a true prohibition as a paternal advice; a warning to abstain from a pernicious and deadly

fruit. Surely this idea conforms better to the idea one should have regarding God's goodness, and even to the text of *Genesis*, than to the ideas which Divines are pleased to prescribe to us; for with regard to the threat of the twofold death, it has been shown that the expression *morte morieris* has not the emphatic meaning which they attach to it, and is only an hebraism that is [also] used elsewhere [in Scripture], where such an emphasis would be out of place" (*OC* IV, 939f., n.). The Vulgate's *morte morieris*, King James's *thou shalt surely die* (*Genesis* 2:17 and 3:4), attempts to render faithfully the Hebrew cognate accusative "dying you will die"; for the same construction, see, for example, *Genesis* 1:11, *Joel* 2:22; on these texts, see Robert Sacks, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston,1991). **they will love their kind** *ils aimeront leurs semblables* brings to mind, especially in the present context, the biblical precept to love one's neighbor, *Leviticus* 9:18 (cp. *Mark* 12:28–34, *Luke* 10:25–28, *Matthew* 22:34–40); but it also recalls the reference at the beginning of this long and difficult sentence to the "men like myself" or "men of my kind," the *hommes semblables à moi*.

N X [1] **Nations of men of gigantic size** Traditionally, the Patagonians, about whom see Note X [11]; about giants, see also *Languages* 3 [3] and Editorial Note. **Pygmies** Homer *Iliad*, III, 6; Aristotle, *History of Animals* VIII, 12, 597a 6–10; Edward Tyson, *Orang-outang, sive Homo Sylvestris, or the anatomie of a Pygmie compared with that of a monkey, an ape, and a man; to which is added a Philological Essay concerning the Cynocephali, the satyrs and sphinges of the ancients, wherein it will appear that they are all, either apes or monkeys, and not men as formerly pretended* (London, 1699). In spite of his title, Tyson evidently studied a chimpanzee (see Franck Tinland, *L'Homme sauvage*, pp. 104–119). **Laplanders . . . Greenlanders . . . Peoples with tails** Buffon, *De la nature de l'homme*, Duchet edition, pp. 223–226, 242–244. **Ctesias** (fl. *c.* 400 BC) Physician at the court of King Artaxerxes II of Persia, he wrote a work on Persia and another on India, only fragments of which survive.

N X [2] **the Kingdom of the Congo** The present Zaïre. **the translator of the Hist[oire] des Voyages** Samuel Purchas (1577–1626) in *Purchas, His Pilgrimage; or Relations of the World and the Religion Observed in All Ages* (London, 1613 and 1625). ***Orang-outangs*** are, of course, not found in Africa, but only in Borneo and Sumatra. Andrew **Battel** An English merchant (*c.* 1565–1645) whose adventure-filled accounts of Brazil and Angola Purchas recorded. **Mayomba** Mountain in central Congo or Zaïre. **Kingdom of Loango** North of the mouth of the Congo River. ***Pongo*** Gorillas. ***Enjokos*** As Purchas remarks at the end of the next paragraph, Battel did not describe these "monsters."

N X [4] Olfert **Dapper** Dutch physician and geographer (d. 1690), whose *Description de l'Afrique* Purchas summarized. If, as it appears, the animal sent to **Prince Frederick-Henry of Orange** (1584–1647) is the same as that described by Nicholas Tulp, then it was, in all likelihood, a chimpanzee (see Tinland, *L'Homme sauvage*, pp. 103f.). Jerome **Merolla** (*c.*1650 – *c.*1710), whose account of the Congo, where he spent ten years as a Franciscan missionary, appeared in 1692.

N X [5] **These ... Anthropomorphic animals ... in the third volume** Rousseau evidently erred; the descriptions are found in vol. IV of the *Histoire des Voyages* (Starobinski). ***Beggos*** and ***Mandrills*** Respectively, the natives' and the Europeans' name for what here probably is either a chimpanzee or a gorilla. **monsters ... yet ... reproduce** In the vocabulary of the time, "monster" still commonly refers to an animal or plant that cannot reproduce; see Rousseau's *Letters on Botany* VII, *OC* IV, 1188; cp. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* V, 845–848. **Pongos ... fires** contrast *Languages* 9 [29]*. Throughout Rousseau's discussion in this and subsequent Notes, it must be kept in mind that any twentieth-century reader will have seen and read about more varieties of monkeys and apes than had the most intrepid and learned scholars of Rousseau's time. However, Rousseau and all his contemporaries knew that "orang-outang" means "man of the woods" in Malay (N X [4]), and hence in Latin *homo sylvestris*; which is what, for example, Lucretius called the first men (V, 967, 970); thus the name alone tended to prejudge the question at issue, especially for all those who had never so much as seen a single great ape; and the learned and careful Tyson thought he had dissected an orang when he had spent his labors on a chimpanzee.

N X [6] **are neither beasts nor gods, but men** Added in 1782.

N X [7] **What would have been ... Child found in 1694** Mentioned in Note III [1] above. **gave no sign ... Cradle** is a direct quote from Condillac, *Essay* pt. I, sec. IV, ch. 2, § 23. Immediately after **If, unfortunately for him,** Rousseau inserted by hand "or fortunately" in the copy of the *Discourse* which he presented to Davenport.

N X [9] **The Platos, the Thales, and the Pythagorases** All three philosophers traveled extensively.

N X [11] Charles Marie de **La Condamine** (1701–1774) participated in an expedition to the equator in 1736 and published an absorbing *Relation abrégée du voyage fait à l'intérieur de l'Amérique méridionale* (Paris, 1745), reprinted as *Voyage sur l'Amazone*, edited by H. Minguet (Maspero, Paris, 1981). This book clearly influenced Rousseau in many particulars, but especially in its discussion of the growth of language:

"All the *South-American* languages with which I had any acquaintance are extremely poor; some are energetic and can be elegant, but all lack terms to express abstract and universal ideas; a clear proof of the little progress made by these people. *Time, duration, space, being, substance, matter, body*; all these and many other words are without equivalent in their languages; not only the names of metaphysical beings, but those of moral beings can be rendered among them only imperfectly and only with the help of elaborate circumlocutions. There is no proper term corresponding to the terms *virtue, justice, freedom, gratitude, ingratitude*" (pp. 53f.; reprint, pp. 62f.). In the *Emile*, Rousseau quotes La Condamine's report (*Relation abrégée*, pp. 56f.; reprint, pp. 68f.) about a people that could count only up to three, although, as Rousseau adds, they had of course seen the five fingers on their hand (*OC* IV, 572n., tr. 271n.). Pierre Louis Moreau de **Maupertuis** (1698–1759) led a scientific expedition to Lapland and reported on that journey in his *Relation d'un voyage au fond de la Laponie*. Jean **Chardin** (1643–1713), who journeyed through Persia as far as India between 1671 and 1681, afterwards settled in London, was created baronet by Charles II, and became the British *chargé d'affaires* and agent of the East India Company in Holland; he published a widely read *Travels in Persia and the East Indies* (1686). Englebert **Kaempfer** (1651–1716), German physician who spent some years in the Far East, from whose papers a posthumous *History of Japan and Siam* was compiled (London 1728; French translation, expanded, Amsterdam, 1729). Charles Pinot **Duclos** (1704–1772), member of the French Academy, whose commentary on the *Port Royal Grammar* at least in part inspired the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, was to prove one of Rousseau's steadiest friends; Rousseau dedicated his early opera *The Village Soothsayer* to him, and he entrusted to him one of the manuscripts of his late, apologetic *Dialogues: Rousseau juge de Jean Jacques*. **Malabar** Province of southwestern India, now part of Kerala. **Pegu** Formerly a kingdom, and now a province north of Rangoon. **Ava** City, southwest of Mandalay, which for four hundred years was the capital of what is now Myanmar (formerly Burma). **Tucumán** Province of northern Argentina.

N XII [1]–[2] **Locke's Civil Government** Or *Second Treatise of Government*, ch. 7, "Of Civil or Political Society," §§ 79, 80. We have translated the text Rousseau published; it departs only slightly from the French version which he consulted: *Du gouvernement civil*, in a translation attributed to David Mazel, first published in 1691 by Wolfgang, Amsterdam. Mazel's translation omits Chapter 1 of Locke's *Second Treatise* with its summary of the *First Treatise* and its definition

of political power. It begins with the chapter entitled "Of the State of Nature."

Where Mazel's translation of Locke reads	Rousseau writes
to feed on grass	*to graze the grass*
is de facto commonly with child	*is commonly with child*
the wisdom of the great creator	*the wisdom of the creator*

All other divergences between Locke's original and Rousseau's version are due to the published French translation available to Rousseau; a number of them are noteworthy, and the reader may wish to compare the text published here with Locke's text.

N XII [5] **the Horse . . . the Stag, or all other Quadrupeds** In 1782, this reads "Quadruped animals." **live exclusively off grass** In 1782, this reads "off grasses."

N XIII **"Nor would the happiness . . ."** *Nec quidquam felicitati humani generis decederet, si, pulsa tot linguarum peste et confusione, unam artem callerent mortales, et signis, motibus, gestibusque licitum foret quidvis explicare. Nunc vero ita comparatum est, ut animalium quae vulgo bruta creduntur, melior longe quam nostra hac in parte videatur conditio, ut pote quae promptius et forsan felicius, sensus et cogitationes suas sine interprete significent, quam ulli queant mortales, praesertim si peregrino utantur sermone.* Is[aac] Vossius [1618–1689], *de Poema[tum] Cant[u] et Viribus Rythmi* (Oxford, 1673), pp. 65f.; where Rousseau wrote *motibus*, "movements," Vossius had written *nutibus*, "clues."

N XIV **Plato, showing** In the *Republic* VII, 522d. **Palamedes** was one of the Greek leaders in the Trojan War; in *Languages* 5 [11] Rousseau refers to the tradition that credits him with also having added some letters to the alphabet. In connection with the issue raised in Note XIV, see also the passages from La Condamine cited on p. 376 above.

N XV [1] ***Amour propre* and *amour de soi-même*** Rousseau here for the first time, and succinctly, formulates the contrast between the two forms of love of self that is so basic to his entire moral psychology. He develops and illustrates it in all of his subsequent writings, even when he does not explicitly refer to either passion by name. Partly for this reason, it is difficult to single out specific passages for special notice; still, see, among others: *Emile* IV, *OC* IV, 494 and context, and 547f., tr. 214f., 252f.; *Dialogues*, *OC* I, 669f., 789f., 805–807; *Pol. Ec.* [30], [36] *et seq.*; *Corsica*, *OC* III, 937f.; and this *Discourse*, II [52].

N XVI [3] **the Greenlanders** The story is told by the influential polygenist Isaac de La Peyrère, *Relation du Groenland* (Paris, 1647), pp. 169–184 (Starobinski).

N XVI [4] **"All the efforts of the Dutch Missionaries . . ."** The story is told by Peter Kolben, and may, as Rousseau indicates, be found in the *Histoire des voyages.*
N XVIII **Marshal de V***** Louis-Hector, Duke of Villars (1653–1734), Marshal of France (Starobinski).
N XIX **Distributive justice** Distributes, as Rousseau indicates, honors and assigns rank in proportion to contributions to the polity: Aristotle's classic statement of the issues (*Nicomachean Ethics* V, 2, 1130b 30–33, V, 3, 1131a 23–28; and *Politics* III, 12, 13) is reported by Pufendorf (*Droit* I, 7, § xii and *Man and Citizen* I, 2, § xiv); Pufendorf further discusses distributive justice at length in *Droit* (I, 7, §§ ix–xiii), and in the course of that discussion (I, 7, § xi, n. 4) he quotes the passage from **Isocrates** (*Aeropageticus* 21f.), which Rousseau also quotes in this Note. Regarding the role of Roman **Censors**, cp. *SC* IV 7. **rigorous right**, or right strictly and narrowly so called, is right or justice that may appropriately be legislated and enforced, in contrast to what virtue and equity might require: this distinction between distributive justice and rigorous right is introduced by Grotius, *Right*, Proleg. §§ viii–x and I, 1, §§ v–viii, followed by Hobbes, *De cive* III, 6 and XIV, 6f.; see also Pufendorf, *Droit* I, 2, § viii; Burlamaqui, *Droit naturel* I, 11, § xi; and Rousseau's *Letter to d'Alembert* (*OC* V, p. 61; Fuchs edn., p. 89; tr. Bloom p. 66).

The issue briefly raised in this Note, the relation between morals and law, is central to both *Discourses*, but also to the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, and indeed to the whole of Rousseau's moral and political thought.

LETTER TO PHILOPOLIS (pages 223–228)

This letter replies to the main points raised in a quite thoughtful criticism of the *Discourse on Inequality* published in the October 1755 issue of the *Mercure de France* over the signature "Philopolis," or "Patriot." Socrates's accuser Meletus had called himself "philopolis" (Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 24b 5). The pseudonym was chosen for the occasion by Charles Bonnet (1720–1793), a well-known naturalist, scion of a patrician Geneva family, and himself for many years a member of his city's ruling council, the Two Hundred. Bonnet disapproved of Rousseau's views from the first, and he eventually played an active part in having the *Social Contract* and the *Emile* condemned by Geneva. He also urged his fellow scientist Albrecht von Haller, of Berne, to get that city to expel Rousseau after he had taken refuge in its territory. Rousseau later described Bonnet as a man who, "though a materialist, is of

a most intolerant orthodoxy wherever I am concerned" (*Conf.* XII, *OC* I, 632).

Rousseau clearly thought of this *Letter* "as an authoritative statement of his views. Although he did not publish it, he did make a clean copy of it, and a letter of Bonnet's in 1763 indicates that he had learned of the existence and of the tone, if not of the contents, of Rousseau's reply.

The *Letter to Philopolis* has most recently been edited by Vaughan, in *Rousseau*, vol. I, pp. 221–227; by Starobinski in *OC* III, 230–236; by Launay in the Intégrale *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. II, pp. 272–275; by Leigh in *CC* III, 185–193, no. 328; and by Meier in *Diskurs/Discours*, pp. 460–477. The last four also reprint Bonnet's letter.

[10] **the Leibnizian . . . Philosophy** Bonnet had read Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's (1646–1716) *Theodicy* (1710) some years earlier, and in his *Mémoires autobiographiques* he tells of the lasting impression it had made on him.

[11] **According to Leibniz** Who argued that this is the best of possible worlds – e.g., *Theodicy, Essays on the Goodness of God* . . . I §§ 8–10 *et passim* **and to** Alexander **Pope** (1688–1744), whose *Essay on Man* defends the thesis "Whatever is, is right" (*Essay*, Epistle I, line 294, Epistle IV, line 394). . . . **things may be good relative to the whole, though evil in themselves. What contributes to the general good may be a particular evil** . . . On this basic issue, see *Letter to Voltaire* [24] together with its Editorial Note, as well as the Introduction, p. xxvii above.

[12] **Algonquins** Indian nation of northeastern America. **Chickasaws** Indians of the Muskhogean tribe in Louisiana.

[14] **the monkey . . . the Orang-outang** See *Second Discourse*, Note X, especially the first half of that long note.

[15] **very powerful reasons for not choosing that kind of life** See especially the *Replies* to criticisms of the *First Discourse*, and *Second Discourse* N IX [14].

[16] ***to be saints*** Rousseau had, of course, written *sains* or "healthy," and not *saints* or "saintly," and Bonnet had clearly understood him correctly. It is to be hoped that Rousseau would not have let stand this gratuitous remark if he had revised the text for publication; the passage in question occurs in *Second Discourse* I [9], above.

[18] ***never known pain . . . pity*** Cp. *Emile*, *OC* IV, 313f., 504–506, tr. 87, 221–223, and especially *Languages* 9 [2]–[4].

[19] ***the Populace, to which M. Rousseau attributes*** Cp. *Second Discourse* I [37]. **Seide murder his Father** Sheik Zopire, while at prayer, but without knowing it was his father he was murdering: Voltaire,

Fanaticism, or Mohammed the Prophet (1741). **Thyestes drink his son's blood** In Crébillon's *Atreus and Thyestes* (1707) Thyestes caused his brother Atreus to kill his own son; in revenge Atreus killed Thyestes's son and, at a banquet, offered him a goblet with the son's blood. [20] **I had said so** In the *Second Discourse* I [25].

Reply to Le Roy (pages 229–231)

Rousseau jotted down this reply at the bottom of the pages of a note by Charles-Georges Le Roy (1723–1789), Master of the King's Hunt, the author of several entries in the *Encyclopedia*, and of the anonymously published *Lettres philosophiques sur l'intelligence et la perfectibilité des animaux* (1768, expanded 1781; and again in 1802). Le Roy was a childhood friend of Helvétius, and it was he who hatched and largely carried out the scheme of getting *De l'esprit* past the censors.

Le Roy's note had been forwarded to Rousseau by Condillac who, in a covering letter, indicated that Buffon agreed with these objections if, indeed, he was not their author (*CC* IV, 98f., 7 September 1756, no. 434). The objections are aimed at Rousseau's suggestion that man may not by nature be carnivorous; and, more generally, at his premise that everything in nature is well ordered. "Make sure of your facts, and perhaps you will find that it is not the case that everything is well ordered." Rousseau speaks to this issue most fully in the *Letter to Voltaire*; see also the Editorial Note to *Languages* 9 [32]*.

Le Roy's criticisms and Rousseau's *Replies* to them were first published by Vaughan, under the title "Reply to a Naturalist," *Rousseau*, vol. I, app. I, pp. 512f. R. A. Leigh identified the writer of the criticisms, and he includes a full critical edition of the relevant texts in *CC* IV, app. A 172, pp. 423–426; as does Meier in *Diskurs/Discours*, pp. 482–489.

Rousseau's *Reply* has also been edited by Starobinski, in *OC* III, 237, reprinted together with Le Roy's comments in Starobinski's "Folio" edition of the *Second Discourse* (Gallimard, Paris, 1989), pp. 167, 276f.; and by Launay, in the Intégrale *Oeuvres complètes, vol.* II, p. 275.

Letter to Voltaire (pages 232–246)

Voltaire was moved by the terrible earthquake which struck Lisbon in 1755, and which wreaked such widespread destruction and caused the death of so many thousands of people, to write a long *Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne, ou examen de cet axiome: "tout est bien"* (*Poem on the Lisbon Disaster, or examination of the axiom "All is Good"*). It was

published together with an earlier poem on natural law in March 1756. Rousseau received a copy of these *Poèmes sur le désastre de Lisbonne et sur la loi naturelle* in July. He recounts the circumstances surrounding his writing this *Letter* in response to Voltaire's poems in *Conf.* IX (*OC* I, 429–430), and of its publication in *Conf.* X (*OC* I, 539–542). For full details, see R. A. Leigh, "Rousseau's Letter to Voltaire on Optimism," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (1964), 30:247–309, summarized in *CC* IV, 50–59; and in B. Gagnebin's "Notice bibliographique," *OC* IV, 1880–1884. Voltaire acknowledged Rousseau's *Letter* in a brief, conciliatory note (12 September 1756, *CC* IV, 102, no. 437), in which he did not speak to the issues which Rousseau had raised in his *Letter*. Rousseau believed that Voltaire wrote *Candide* as his full reply to the *Letter* (*Conf.* IX, *OC* I, 430).

The *Letter* has most recently been edited by R. A. Leigh in *CC* IV, 37–84; by Henri Gouhier in *OC* IV, 1059–1075; by Theodore Besterman in his *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire*, vol. CI (*Correspondance*, vol. XVII) (The Voltaire Foundation at the Taylor Institution, Oxford, 1971), pp. 280–297; and by Gilbert Fauconnier in *Etudes Rousseauistes et index J.-J. Rousseau*, Série B, vol. V (Slatkine, Geneva, 1979), pp. 152–359. The present translation is based on the *OC* version of the text; departures from it are flagged in the Editorial Notes; the Notes also reproduce variant readings that might be of interest to attentive readers who are not Rousseau specialists.

[1] **I do not know at whose instance these might have come to me, if not yours.** Voltaire had indeed asked to have copies sent to Diderot, to d'Alembert, and to Rousseau. Charles Duclos had asked to be the one who would transmit Rousseau's copy to him: Thieriot to Voltaire, 6 July 1756.

[3] **You charge Pope and Leibniz with insulting our evils by maintaining that all is well [*or*: good]** "All is right [*or*: good]" translates *tout est bien*, the formula by which contemporary French translators rendered Pope's "whatever is, is right" (*An Essay on Man*, Epistle I, line 294, Epistle IV, line 394). However, *tout est bien* becomes a formula in its own right and with its own meaning in Voltaire's *Poem*, and especially in Rousseau's *Letter*. For *bien* (n., adv.), *bon* (adj.), i.e. "good" and "well," are central to his understanding of man and of his place in the scheme of things. A further reason for preserving an explicit reference to "good" in translating *tout est bien* is that both Voltaire and Rousseau are concerned not only with Pope's dictum, but also with Leibniz's proposition that this is "the best (*optimum*) of all possible worlds" (*Theodicy* I, §§ 8–10 *et passim*). The same difficulties that surround the attempt to translate *bon* and *bien* surround the

attempt to translate its antonym, *mal* (n., adv.). Used as a noun, it may mean "pain," "hurt," or, especially in the plural (*maux*), "ills," as in ". . . and makes us rather bear those ills we have . . ."; but also, as it does here, "evil." Similar difficulties surround *malheur* (n), *malheureux* (n., adj.), which may mean "unhappiness" and "unhappy," "misfortune" and "unfortunate," but also "wretch" and "wretched."

[7] **You do not wish, Sir, to have your work looked upon as a work against Providence**: "I do not rise up against Providence," Voltaire, *Poem on the Lisbon Disaster*, line 232; however, Voltaire is reported to have told Pastor Jacob Vernet ". . . de cette affaire [*sc.* le tremblement de terre de Lisbonne] la Providence en a dans le cul" (cited by Henri Gouhier, *Rousseau et Voltaire* [Vrin, Paris, 1983], p.76); **although you taxed a book in which I pleaded the case of mankind against itself with being a writing against mankind**: Voltaire's letter acknowledging Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* begins: "I am in receipt, Sir, of your new book against mankind," 30 August 1755, *CC* III, 156 (no. 317).

[8] **if . . . it is a contradiction for matter to be both sentient and insentient** In a passage which provoked the most intense controversy, Locke had said that he saw no contradiction in some systems of senseless matter having a power to perceive and think: *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* IV, 3, § vi; Rousseau returns to the point in his *Letter to Franquières* [5] (in *SC* tr.). Voltaire's sympathetic discussion of Locke's suggestion in the thirteenth of his immensely popular *Philosophical Letters* had given it wide currency on the Continent. **I believe I have shown . . . most of our physical evils are also of our own making** in *First Discourse*, Part I, *Second Discourse* I [9], II [13].

[9] **You would have wished . . . the quake had happened in . . . a wilderness** Voltaire, *Poem*, lines 53–55. Also consider, in this connection, the discussion of cataclysms in the *Second Discourse* II [14], and of "the ancient traditions about natural disasters" in *Languages*, 9 [27].

[10] **I learned in *Zadig* . . . that a quick death** In chapter XX of his novel *Zadig, or Destiny*, Voltaire has the character he calls The Hermit and also The Angel Jesrad kill off perfectly innocent persons before they commit the evils they are "destined" to commit. **the ordinary course of things**; the expression, which recurs two paragraphs below, is reminiscent of Bacon's "common course of nature" and "common course of the universe" (*Novum Organum*, The Second Book of Aphorisms, especially no. XVII); and of Spinoza's "common order of nature" (*Ethics* II, 29, scholium; II, 30, proof; IV, 4, corollary). Both Bacon and Spinoza use the expression to characterize what might be called the world of ordinary or common experience in contrast to rational or

scientific accounts of nature; in other words, a – if not the – central issue of this *Letter*. Locke contrasts "the ordinary course of things" with miracles: e.g. *Essay* IV, 16, §§ xiii, xiv; as does Hume "the ordinary course of events," "the course of nature" and "the common and experienced course of nature," e.g. *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* XI, "Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State" and "Of the Immortality of the Soul," *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, edited by T. H. Green and T. H. Grose (Longman Green and Co., London, 1889, 1912), vol. II, p. 400. Rousseau's expression "the order of human things" ([25]) would appear to be equivalent to "the ordinary course of things." Voltaire, by contrast, does not draw this distinction between ordinary experience and rational or scientific accounts when he lays it down that it is "the general order of the world" that some events do, and some do not, have effects, "that the links in the chain [of events] would not be disturbed by a little more or a little less matter, by a little more or a little less irregularity" (*Poem*, note 1; quoted more fully in the Editorial Note to [17] below). This is the thesis which Rousseau will most insistently challenge in the immediate sequel. In considering how he thinks about the great chain of beings, one might also note that on one occasion, speaking about parthenogenesis, which he calls "contrary to the ordinary march of nature," he is led to raise fundamental questions about the status of natural kinds or species: *Fragments pour un dictionnaire des termes d'usage en botanique*, article "Aphrodites," *OC* IV, 1212; consider also the 1782 correction to *Second Discourse* P [3], p. 353 above.

[11] **. . . difficult . . . to find . . . good computations among Philosophers** Voltaire had written

> *"Ce malheur, dites vous, est le bien d'un autre être."*
> *Quand la mort met le comble aux maux que j'ai soufferts,*
> *Le beau soulagement d'être mangé des vers!*
> *Tristes calculateurs des misères humaines,*
> *Ne me consolez point, vous aigrissez mes peines . . .*
>
> (97–101)

On the philosophers' calculations of the goods and evils of life, see also *Second Discourse* N IX [1] above. **the sweet sentiment of existence** see *Discourse on Inequality* I [21] and the corresponding Editorial Note, p. 143 above.

[12] **You think with Erasmus that few people would wish to be reborn** Voltaire makes the point (*Poem*, line 210), without citing Erasmus; Rousseau is referring to Erasmus, *Colloquies* ("The Godly Feast"), from which he evidently also drew the two Cicero quotations

below (R. A. Leigh). **the country where you are** Voltaire was living near Geneva at the time. **willingly trade even Paradise** some manuscripts of this frequently reworked *Letter* read "willingly trade even the Paradise he expects and is owed . . ." (*CC* IV, 59, n. 54) **who can say with Cato . . .** *Nec me vixisse poenitet, quoniam ita vixi, ut frustra me natum non existimem*, a slightly modified version of a remark which Cicero attributes to the Elder Cato in his dialogue *De senectute* (*On Old Age*) XXIII, 84; Rousseau borrows the passage from Erasmus, *Colloquies*, 156 (R. A. Leigh, in *CC* IV, 66).

[14] **As regards M. de Crouzas, . . . I trust his authority as little as I do his proofs.** Reading with the ms and the text published by Leigh; *OC* reads: "I trust his proofs just as little as I do his authority." Jean-Pierre de Crouzaz (1663–1750) had published two criticisms of Pope's *Essay*, and Rousseau had read – and rejected – at least one of these at the same time as he first read Pope's *Essay* itself: to François de Conzié, 17 January 1742, *CC* I, 132–139, no. 43; Voltaire calls Crouzaz "a learned Geometer" (*Poem*, n. 1); in his reply, Rousseau had initially called him "a poor geometer and an even poorer reasoner," adding that his reputation was altogether undeserved; in the final version of the *Letter* he chose to omit these judgments. However, in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* he has his character Julie write : "M. de Crouzaz has just given us a refutation of Pope's Epistles which I have read with some annoyance. Truth to tell, I do not know which one of these two authors is right; but I do know that M. de Crouzaz's book will never lead to a good deed's being done, and that there is nothing good one is not tempted to do upon setting down Pope's book. I have not, for my own part, any other way of judging what I read than to inquire how it leaves my soul disposed, and I can scarcely imagine what can be the good of a book that does not incline its readers to good" (*NH* II, 18, *OC* II, 261); for Diderot's extensive critical remarks on its first French translation, see his *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. I, pp. 191–266. Pope, as might be expected, shared Rousseau's judgment of Crouzaz: he reserved a place for him in the *Dunciad* (IV, 198). **actions without a principle and effects without a cause; which is at odds with all philosophy.** Voltaire's – and Crouzaz's – argument is specifically directed against the position adopted by Leibniz, and which Rousseau here restates in his own name: cp. e.g. Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, § VI.

[17] **You draw a distinction between events that have effects, and those that do not.** Again in direct response to a point of Voltaire's: ". . . every . . . [event] has its cause in the event which precedes it; this is something no philosopher has ever doubted. If Caesar's

mother had not undergone a Caesarian section, Caesar would not have destroyed the republic, he would not have adopted Octavius, and Octavius would not have left the empire to Tiberius. Maximilian marries the heiress of Burgundy and the Low Countries, and this marriage becomes the source of two hundred years of war. But Caesar's having spat to the right or to the left, the heiress of Burgundy having her hair dressed one way or another, surely did not change anything in the general system.

"There are, then, events that have effects, and others that do not. The chain of events is comparable to a genealogical tree; some branches are seen to die out, and others perpetuate the race. A number of events remain without filiation. Thus in every machine there are effects which are necessary to the movement, and others which are indifferent to it, which are the consequence of the first, and produce nothing. The wheels of a carriage make it go; but the journey gets accomplished just as well regardless of whether they make a little more or a little less dust fly. Such is the general order of the world that the links in the chain [of events] would not be disturbed by a little more or a little less matter, a little more or a little less irregularity" (note 1 to the *Poem*).

Voltaire's argument again takes issue with Leibniz, specifically with his thesis that ". . . the notion of an individual substance contains once and for all everything that can ever happen to it, and that in considering this notion one can see in it everything it will be possible truthfully to say about it, just as we can see in the nature of the circle all the properties that can be deduced from it" (*Discourse on Metaphysics*, § XIII). Leibniz goes on, in this same section of the *Discourse*, to illustrate his thesis with Caesar as his example. . . . **just as several almost imperceptible effects frequently combine to produce a considerable event.** The same argument is stated more tersely at the end of the first half of the *Second Discourse*, I [53]. **the grain of sand mentioned by Pascal**: "Cromwell was going to lay waste the whole of Christendom; the royal family was lost, and his own forever in power, but for a small grain of sand that settled in his ureter. Rome itself was going to be threatened by him; but with this tiny stone settled there, he is dead, his family cast low, everything at peace, and the king restored" *Pensées* (Brunschvicg no. 176). **I share your Brahman's opinion** Traditionally editors have taken this to be a reference to the "hermit" in Voltaire's novel *Zadig*, ch. XX; Masters and Kelly (in their edition of *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discourse on the Origins of Inequality, Polemics, and Political Economy* [Dartmouth, Hanover, NH, 1992], p. 194, n. 15) plausibly suggest that it is a reference to Voltaire's short *Dialogue entre un Brachmane et un Jésuite sur la nécessité et l'enchaînement des choses*"

(*Dialogue Between a Brahman and a Jesuit About the Necessity and Connectedness of Things*), first published in the year in which Rousseau wrote this *Letter*. The *Dialogue* concludes with the following exchange:

The Jesuit:	If I understand you, one would not have to pray [to] God?
The Brahman:	One has to adore him. But what do you understand by praying [to] him?
The Jesuit:	What everybody understands by it; that he favor our desires, that he satisfy our needs.
The Brahman:	I understand you. You want a gardener to have sun at the very hour God destined from all eternity for rain, and a pilot to have an east wind when there has to be a west wind to cool the earth and seas. Father, to pray is to submit . . .

[19] **the nature of light and of lighted spaces** i.e. how light propagates through space. **Bayle, for whose wisdom and restraint in matters of opinion I share your admiration** . . . In the notes to his *Poem*, Voltaire defends Bayle against the attacks on his impieties by noting that Cicero said far worse without being censured for it (*Poem*, n. 1). Rousseau turns this defense of Bayle into an attack on Voltaire by charging him with professing Bayle's skepticism regarding moral and political matters, while being dogmatic regarding natural science; Rousseau here presents himself as being, by contrast, a skeptic regarding natural science who, for that very reason, is hesitant to be dogmatically skeptical about what might be called the moral and political "ordinary course of things."

[20] **you have made a correction in Pope's system. . .by observing** . . . "God holds the chain, and is not chained by it" *Poem on the Lisbon Disaster* (line 75). Rousseau had argued for this view at some length in his 1742 letter to de Conzié, *CC* I, 133–136; it is not entirely clear that Pope said or meant anything different.

[21] **you have man say: "I must be as dear to my master . . . as the planets."** In a note to the Preface to his *Poem*.

[22] **That a man's corpse feeds worms . . . is not . . . a compensation for that man's death** Voltaire, *Poem*, lines 97–100 (quoted in the Editorial Note to [10] above). **Codrus**, king of Athens, upon learning that according to an oracle the invading Dorians would conquer Athens if they avoided killing her king, entered the Dorians' camp in disguise and provoked a fight in which he was slain; the Dorians, upon learning what had happened, ended their campaign and returned home; no one was thought fit to be king after Codrus, the kingship was abolished, and his son and heir was installed as Archon. **Curtius Manlius**:

according to legend, when a chasm opened up in the Roman Forum, the soothsayers declared that it would close up only once Rome's greatest treasure was cast into it; Curtius, proclaiming that a virtuous citizen was the city's greatest treasure, rode into the chasm in full battle-gear; whereupon the chasm disappeared. **the Decii**, father as well as son, both of them consuls, sacrificed their lives in two different wars to secure Roman victories. **the Philaeni**, two Carthaginian brothers who accepted being buried alive to enlarge their City's territory.

[23] **... instead of saying *All is well* [or: *good*] (*Tout est bien*), it might be preferable to say *The whole is good* or *All is good for the whole* (*Le tout est bien*).** The addition of the article in *Le tout est bien* changes "all" into "the all" or, more idiomatically, "the whole." Contrast these formulations with *Genesis* 1:31.

[24] **the Priests and the Devout, who ... depending on whether they end up with goods or evils.** I.e. who claim they are predestined to be saved or damned, elected or reprobated, and that their being good in this life does not affect the outcome; it follows that the outcome, regardless of what it is, confirms what was said to have been predestined. Rousseau develops the point in the next paragraph, beginning with "By contrast, a devout person ..."

[25] **as Seneca says** in *On Providence* VI, 1; **Cartouche** the notorious highwayman; see Editorial Note to *Observations* [53], p. 335 above; **why were they allowed to live?** Again, the character Voltaire calls The Hermit and also The Angel Jesrad in his *Zadig, or Destiny* therefore kills off perfectly innocent persons before they have a chance to commit the evils they are "destined" to commit. While Voltaire intends this tale as a *reductio ad absurdum* of Leibniz's "optimism," Rousseau implies that such preemptive murders would be the logical consequence of Voltaire's attack on "optimism," and that his attack therefore collapses in *reductio ad absurdum*. **... Providence is exclusively universal ...** "God ... governs by general, not particular laws": Pope, *An Essay on Man*, Epistle IV, Argument (I), cp. Epistle I, lines 145f. and Epistle IV, lines 35f. "What misleads in this matter ... is that one finds oneself inclined to believe that what is best in the whole is also the best possible in each part ... but the part of the best whole is not necessarily the best that could be made of that part ...": Leibniz, *Theodicy*, §§ 212, 213. Regarding this issue, see also *Philopolis* [11] and Editorial Note. Julie and Saint-Preux, the two main characters of Rousseau's novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, discuss the question of "general laws" in terms of the role and efficacy of prayer, as well as of specifically Christian debates about grace and election. Julie writes: "According to you, this act of humility [i.e. prayer] is without benefit to us, and God,

having given us everything that can incline us to good by giving us conscience, thereafter abandons us to ourselves and lets our freedom act. That is not, as you know, the doctrine of Saint Paul nor is it that professed in our Church ... To listen to you, it would seem that it is a bother for it [i.e. the divine power] to watch over each individual; you fear that a divided and constant attention might tire it, and you find it fairer that it do everything by general laws no doubt because they cost it less care" (*NH*, VI, 6; *OC* II, 672). Saint-Preux replies: "I ... do not believe that after having provided in every way for man's needs, God grants to one person rather than to another some extraordinary assistance, which the one who abuses the common assistance does not deserve, and the one who uses it well does not need. This acceptation of persons does injury to divine justice. Even if this harsh and discouraging doctrine could be deduced from Scripture itself, is not my first duty to honor God? However much respect I may owe the sacred text, I owe its Author more, and I would rather believe the Bible falsified or unintelligible than God unjust or maleficent" (*NH* VI, 7; *OC* II, 684; see also *ib.* V, 5; *OC* II, 595f.; cp. Bayle, "every literal sense [of the biblical text] which entails the obligation to commit crimes is false": "Commentaire philosophique sur ces paroles de l'évangile: contraint-les d'entrer," *Oeuvres diverses* [Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, Hildesheim, 1955, reprint of the 1727 edition published at The Hague], vol. II, pp. 367–560, pp. 367, cp. p. 374). When the Censor's Office required that Saint-Preux's remark be struck, Rousseau replied "These pages must remain exactly as they are. If Saint-Preux wants to be heretical regarding grace, that is his business. Besides, it is necessary that he defend man's freedom, since elsewhere he makes the abuse of this freedom the cause of moral evil: he absolutely has to be a Molinist if he is not to be a Manichean ..." (to Malesherbes, March 1761, *CC* VIII, 237; cp. *ib.* p. 120.) ***Nature wanted us ... Commorandi enim Natura diversorium nobis, non habitandi dedit***: Cicero, *De senectute*, XXIII, 84; it is still the elder Cato speaking.

[28] **Sorbonne** The University of Paris. It became the seat of the Faculty of Theology, which took sides and issued condemnations in all debates that affected the faith. In 1762 it condemned Rousseau's *Emile* in a Pastoral Letter (*mandement*) issued in the name of the Archbishop of Paris, Christophe de Beaumont.

[29] **I naïvely admit** i.e. artlessly and spontaneously. **neither the *pro* nor the *con* seems to me demonstrated ... add the weight of hope to the equilibrium of reason.** This important argument is reminiscent of a suggestion of Bayle's in his discussion of Spinoza's claim (*Ethics* II, 49, scholium) that just as Buridan's ass caught at equal

distance between two stacks of feed would starve to death, so would man be unable to choose between two equally compelling ideas: Bayle counters that men could break this equilibrium by imagining themselves to be their own masters, independent of the objects between which they are choosing, saying "I choose to do this rather than that because it pleases me to do so." The decision would then be exclusively based on their idea that they are free. Bayle's suggestion combines the appearance of free will with its denial. Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, "Buridan," Note C (near the end). Bayle's suggestion is discussed by Leibniz, *Theodicy* III, § 307.
[30] 〈**I remember** . . . Rousseau omitted this important paragraph from the copy of the *Letter* which he sent to Voltaire. Some editors therefore print it separately. It was first published by Streckeisen-Moultou in his 1861 edition of the *Oeuvres et correspondance inédites de J.-J. Rousseau* with a note explaining that it was part of the ms. of the *Letter* in his possession. Rousseau made substantially the same point he makes here in a letter to Vernes on 18 February 1758; in the *Letter to Franquières* [11] of 25 March 1769 (*OC* IV, 1139; see *SC* tr.); in the *Fiction ou Morceau allégorique sur la révélation* (*Fiction or Allegory about Revelation*), an important fragment that was given this title and also first published by Streckeisen-Moultou in *Oeuvres et correspondance inédites*, now in *OC* IV, 1046; and he attributes it to the Savoyard Vicar: "Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar" (*Emile* IV; *OC* IV, 579; tr. pp. 275f.). . . . **the twenty-first philosophical thought**, i.e. the twenty-first of Diderot's *Pensées philosophiques* (*Philosophical Thoughts*), a book which had led to their author's imprisonment in Vincennes, and to which Rousseau had already referred, cautiously but openly, in *First Discourse* [51]*, above. **the most forceful thing ever said** Reading *a jamais dit* with Leigh (*CC* IV, 61) and as the sense requires; *OC* reads *n'a jamais dit*. **both seem . . . equally convincing, only the latter persuades me** Rousseau draws the contrast convince/persuade in a number of other places: the *Preface to "Narcissus"* [2]; *Languages* 4 [4] and 19 [2]; the *Emile* IV (*OC* IV, 453); *NH* V, 5 (*OC* II, 594f.) in the context of a discussion of the origin of evil; and, most particularly, *SC* I 7 [9]. Some of these passages are discussed in Christopher Kelly's "'To persuade without convincing': The Language of Rousseau's Legislator," *American Journal of Political Science* (1987), 31:321–325. The distinction is traditional: to convince is to prove or demonstrate, to persuade is to move to action; proof is properly the province of philosophy and science; persuasion is properly the province of rhetoric (e. g. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* I, 2, 1355b 26f). **the *Henriade* was composed** Diderot had given Voltaire's poem as his example in the *Philosophical*

Thought which Rousseau is here discussing. This *Thought* is intended as a refutation of the traditional anti-materialist objection (in its Stoic anti-Epicurean version: Cicero, *Of the Nature of the Gods* II, 37); see also, e.g., Plato, *Laws* X, 889b–892c (however, compare *Phaedo* 99b3–d3 and Leibniz's singular use of this comment in his *Discourse on Metaphysics* §§ XIX, XX); Aristotle, *Physics* II, 196a 24–196b 4, 198a 5–13, 199b 5–7. **what . . . I call *proof of sentiment* called *prejudice*** Rousseau must have been acquainted with Bayle's judgment: "Proofs of sentiment settle nothing . . . Every people is imbued with proofs of sentiment for its religion: they are therefore more often false than true": *Continuation des pensées diverses*, in *Oeuvres diverses*, vol. XX (p. 214b).
[31] **I think . . . one cannot too forcefully attack the superstition that disturbs society, nor too much respect the Religion that upholds it.** In the so-called "ms. 2" this sentence initially read "Thus I could not approve of reasoning about such subjects in public in popular language [*langage vulgaire*] and, if I may say so, still less in verse."
[32] **regardless of what the Sophist Hobbes may have said . . .** All editors refer to Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. XXX and/or XXXI, and to *De cive*, ch. XV. The problem with these references is not that Rousseau may not have known the *Leviathan* at first hand; but that Hobbes consistently defends the same view as Rousseau, that the state has no control over what happens *in foro interno*: "There is another Errour in their [*sc.* the Clergy's] Civill Philosophy (which they never learned of Aristotle, nor Cicero, nor any other of the Heathen,) to extend the power of the Law, which is the Rule of actions onely, to the very Thoughts and Consciences of men, by Examination and *Inquisition* of what they Hold, notwithstanding the Conformity of their Speech and Actions[;] . . . to force him [*sc.* a man] to accuse himself of Opinions, when his Actions are not by Law forbidden, is against the Law of Nature; and especially in them, who teach, that a man shall bee damned to Eternall and extream torments, if he die in a false opinion concerning an Article of the Christian Faith": Hobbes, *Leviathan* ch. IV, 46. The barb at Hobbes must therefore be read – like so much else in this *Letter* – as a concession to popular opinion or sentiment.
[34] **the principles of morality and of natural right** For the use of "natural right" in this context, see "reasoned natural right" in the *Geneva ms.* II, 4 [14], and the Introduction to *SC* tr. **And if there were intolerant nonbelievers who wanted to force the people to believe nothing, I would banish them no less sternly than those who want to force the people to believe whatever they please.** In "ms. 2" Rousseau goes on as follows at this point: "For one sees in the zealotry of their judgments [*crossed out*: in the acidulousness of

the atheism that devours them and the imperious haughtiness of their judgments], in the bitterness of their satires, that they only lack being masters to persecute believers just as cruelly as they are themselves persecuted by the fanatics. Where is the peaceable and gentle man who finds it good that one not think as he does? This man will certainly never be found among the devout and he still remains to be found among the philosophers."

[35] **I would wish, then, . . . a kind of civil profession of faith, containing, positively . . . and, negatively, the fanatical maxims one would be bound to reject, not as impious, but as seditious.** "Ms. 1" goes on: "Furthermore I would like the State to let particulars dispose freely of their conscience as they will always dispose of it in spite of the State." **every Religion that could conform to the code, would be allowed; every Religion that did not conform to it, would be proscribed; and everyone would be free to have no other Religion than the code itself.** "Ms. 1" goes on: "Priestly disputes, since they could never disturb the peace, would keep the devout occupied and the wise amused without danger." **I passionately wish . . . which the devout have always lacked.** In "ms. 2" Rousseau crossed out the last clause, and substituted: "which in practice everyone lacks." **I urge you to meditate on this project, which must appeal at least to your soul.** In "ms. 2" Rousseau crossed out "your soul" and replaced it with "the author of *Alzire*."

[36] Dr. Théodore **Tronchin** (1709–1781), renowned physician at the time; Rousseau sent him this *Letter* with a covering note requesting that he transmit it to Voltaire (18 August 1756; *CC* IV, 85f., no. 425); Tronchin's acknowledgment of that note (1 September 1756; *CC* IV, 93–95, no. 431) draws a sharp and rather unflattering portrait of Voltaire. **you enjoy** Voltaire's villa outside Geneva was called "Les Délices," "The Delights"; **but I hope, and hope embellishes everything.** The status of hope is central to this debate. As Pope had made clear early in his own poem, the hope at issue is first and foremost hope for the immortality of the individual soul (*Essay on Man*, Epistle I, lines 91–98). Now, the first, unauthorized, publications of Voltaire's poem ended

Mortels, il faut souffrir,
Se soumettre en silence, adorer et mourir.

Mortals, we must suffer,
Submit in silence, adore and die.

He quickly recognized that ordinary readers and, more to the point, the ecclesiastical authorities, might think this conclusion too gloomy.

He therefore inserted "hope" between "adore" and "die." Even this seemed inadequate, and he re-worked the ending massively. He now summarized his difference with Leibniz and Pope as follows

> *Someday all will be good* [or: *well*], such is our hope;
> *All is good* [or: *well*] now, such is the illusion.

and now ends the poem

> *Un calife autrefois, à son heure dernière,*
> *Au Dieu qu'il adorait dit pour toute prière;*
> *"Je t'apporte, ô seul roi, seul être illimité,*
> *Tout ce que tu n'as pas dans ton immensité,*
> *Les défauts, les regrets, les maux, et l'ignorance."*
> *Mais il pouvait encore ajouter, "l'espérance."*
>
> Once a Caliph, in his final hour,
> To the God he adored said as his only prayer,
> "I bring you, O sole king, sole boundless being,
> All that, in your immensity, you have not,
> Failings, regrets, evils, and ignorance."
> But he could also have added, *hope*.

In what appears to have been Voltaire's own copy of the poem, the lines

> *Someday all will be good* [or: *well*], such is our hope;
> *All is good* [or: *well*] now, such is the illusion!

were changed in his own hand to read

> *Someday all will be good* [or: *well*], what a frail hope!
> *All is good* [or: *well*], what an illusion!

and the final period of the last line is changed into a question mark:

> But could he also have added *hope*?

followed by a long note about the widely held belief in the immortality of the individual soul. (See George R. Havens, "Voltaire's Pessimistic Revision of his Conclusion of his *Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne*," *Modern Language Notes* (1929), 44:489–493.)

Essay on the Origin of Languages (pages 247–299)

The *Essay on the Origin of Languages* remained unpublished during Rousseau's lifetime, although he had at one time planned to bring it out in a volume that was also to contain a short essay, *On Theatrical*

Imitation, which for the most part summarizes and paraphrases Plato's discussions of imitation in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, and a prose poem, *The Levite of Ephraim*, inspired by the story told at the end of the book of *Judges*. In a surviving draft of the preface for this proposed volume, Rousseau says that what became the present *Essay* had initially been "but a fragment of the *Discourse* on inequality," which he decided to omit from the final version of the *Discourse* because it "was too long and out of place." He was at least in part prompted to expand and recast it by Rameau's attacks on the articles on musical subjects which he had written for the *Encylopedia*, and he may well have reworked the text on several occasions. It is certainly one of his most carefully wrought writings.

Scholars have been divided over whether what he says about pity in this *Essay* and what he had said about it in the *Second Discourse* indicates a change in his views, or whether, as seems more natural and convincing, these differences are best understood in the light of differences in perspective and intention between the two works. In any event, the central problem which he explores throughout the *Essay*, as he had especially in the *Second Discourse*, is the problem of the relations between what he frequently refers to as the *physical* and the *moral*.

There are at present two authoritative editions of this *Essai sur l'origine des langues, où il est parlé de la mélodie et de l'imitation musicale*: one by Charles Porset (Ducros, Bordeaux, 1970); one by Jean Starobinski (Collection "Folio," Gallimard, Paris, 1990). Starobinski's edition has now been incorporated in vol. v of *OC*. The first edition of the present translation (see "Preface", in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses, Together with the Replies to Critics and Essay on the Origin of Languages*, newly edited, translated and annotated by Victor Gourevitch, Harper & Row, New York, 1986) was based on the Porset edition; this version of the translation takes full account of the more recent and complete Starobinski edition. I have also consulted Antonio Verri's Italian translation in his *Origine delle lingue e civiltà in Rousseau* (Longo, Ravenna, 1970), pp. 150–274, and the German translation in E. Koch *et al.*, *Rousseau, Sozialphilosophische und Politische Schriften* (Winkler, Munich, 1981), pp. 162–221.

The numerals preceding the following notes indicate the chapter, the bracketed numbers the paragraph in which the passage under consideration may be found.

Title page Citizen of Geneva appears on Rousseau's manuscript of this *Essay*, but was crossed out at a later time; it is not clear when or by whose hand: André Masson, "Questions de chronologie rousseauiste," *Annales Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1930), 9:37–61, p. 47, and Jean

Starobinski, in the Introduction to his edition of the *Essay*, *OC* v, p. cc; Rousseau explained that he used this title only for what might be called political works (*NH*, 2nd Preface, *OC* II, 27f.

1 [2] **As soon as one man . . . instinct suggested** Parallels Condillac, *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* pt. II, sec. I, ch. 1, § 2.

1 [3] **men dispersed** See this *Essay*, 9 [1]*.

1 [4] **Love . . . inventor of drawing . . . invented speech** Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79), in *Natural History* XXXV, 43, 12, mentions the tradition that drawing was "invented" by a girl tracing the outline of her lover's face (Porset); in 9 [35] Rousseau traces much of the early development of language to love.

1 [6] **the art of pantomime** Or of conveying attitudes, feelings, and passions by means of gestures and movements alone; hence an enacted picture, pure spectacle. See Rousseau's article "Pantomime" in his *Dictionnaire de musique* (*OC* v, 603–1191); cp. Condillac, *Essay* pt. II, sect. I, ch. 1, § 11. **grammars** The prevailing view of grammar is well conveyed in the opening sentences of the so-called *Port Royal Grammar*: "Grammar is the Art of speaking. To speak is to explain one's thoughts by means of signs which men invented to that end. The most convenient such signs have been found to be sounds and words [*voix*]. But because sounds are transient, other signs were invented to make them lasting and visible, and these are the written characters which the Greek call 'grammata,' from which came the word *Grammar*": *Grammaire générale et raisonnée* (*General and Systematic Grammar*), by Antoine Arnauld and Claude Lancelot, first edition 1660, third revised and expanded edition 1676, reissued by R. E. Brekle (Frommann, 1966), p. 5; Rousseau worked with the 1754 edition, which included the Commentary by his friend Charles Pinot Duclos. **the symbols of the Egyptians** Egyptian hieroglyphs are "allegorical figures" (see this *Essay* 5 [2]). The Rosetta stone, with writing in Greek and in Egyptian hieroglyphs, was found in 1799, and by the time of his early death, J. F. Champollion (1790–1832) had laid the foundation for deciphering the hieroglyphs.

1 [7] **Consult ancient history** Sextus, son of Lucius Tarquin, surnamed "Superbus," tyrant of Rome (530–510 BC), sent to his father for advice on how to subdue the Gabii. **Tarquin** walked through a field with the messenger, lopping off the heads of the flowers that stood out above the others, and so conveyed to his son that he should decimate the first families (Livy, *Histories* I, 54; Ovid, *Fasti* II, 701–710). Much the same story is told of **Thrasybulus**, tyrant of Miletus, who, when he was asked by Periander (625–585 BC), tyrant of Corinth, how best, most beautifully, and most safely to rule, took Periander's messen-

ger for a walk in a field and, while they talked of other things, lopped off the tallest and best grown, the most beautiful ears of corn (Herodotus, *Histories* V, 92; Aristotle reverses the roles of the two tyrants, *Politics* III, 13, 1284a 25–32, cp. V, 11, 1313a 38–41; see also Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, III, iv, 33–36). **Alexander** the Great (356–323 BC), reading his mother's latest plea that he curb his largess toward friends and associates, realized that his friend Hephaestion happened also to have read her letter. Alexander put his seal ring over his friend's lips to indicate that he was not to tell anyone that his mother thought his generosity excessive (Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 39). **Diogenes** the Cynic (fl. 360 BC), upon hearing someone deny the reality of motion, got up and walked away (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VI, 39). **Zeno** (fl. 450 BC), the Eleatic philosopher, challenged the commonsense belief in the reality of motion; his best-known paradox is that fleet-footed Achilles cannot overtake a turtle with a headstart on him (Aristotle, *Physics* VI, 9, 239b 14). When **Darius** (*c.* 558–485 BC), king of Persia, invaded the land of the Scythians in 512, a Scythian messenger brought him the gifts which Rousseau mentions. Darius took them as a sign that the Scythians were ready to surrender; his adviser Gobrias took them to say: Unless you Persians fly away like birds, or burrow underground like mice, or jump into the water like frogs, you will never get home, but will be shot here by our arrows. Darius accepted Gobrias's interpretation and, as Rousseau says, hastened to leave Scythia for home (Herodotus, *Histories* IV, 131f.). Rousseau makes the same point, citing the same examples, in *Emile* (IV, *OC* IV, 647 f., tr. 332f.).

I [8] **Levite of Ephraim** *Judges* 19, 20; Rousseau wrote a prose poem recounting this episode, which he had intended to publish together with this *Essay on the Origin of Languages*. **King Saul** II *Samuel* 11:7; the story in many particulars parallels that of the Levite of Ephraim. **Phryne acquitted** "Hyperides, while defending Phrynê . . . caused her to be brought where all could see her; tearing off her undervests he laid bare her bosom and broke into such piteous lamentation . . . that he caused the judges to feel superstitious fear of this handmaid and ministrant of Aphrodite . . ." Athenaeus (AD *c.* 230), *The Deipnosophists* XIII, 590c (translated by Ch. B. Gulick).

I [9] **Horace's judgment** "The mind is stirred less vividly by what finds entrance through the ears / than by what is brought before the trusty eyes . . ." *On the Art of Poetry*, lines 180f. (translated by H. Rushton Fairelough, slightly altered). The Abbé Du Bos had quoted these lines in support of his claim that paintings and, in general, things seen, move us more immediately and more profoundly than does poetry and, generally speaking, than do things heard, because instinct and

experience alike lead us to trust sight more than we do hearing, eyewitnesses more than we do hearsay. In arguing for the superior power of things seen to move us, Du Bos goes so far as to maintain that a tragedy that moves us deeply when we see it performed will scarcely move us at all when we read it; and he adds that the sight of a wounded man bleeding but silent will move us far more than will the cries of a man we know to be wounded, but whose wound we cannot see. "Metaphorically speaking, one might say that the eye is closer to the soul than is the ear": *Réflexions sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (1719), I, 40. His view that a tragedy has the power to move us only when we see it, but not when we read it, directly contradicts Aristotle (*Poetics* VI, 1450b 16–20) and common experience. Rousseau, in direct contradiction to Du Bos, asserts that the mere sight of a wounded man will not move us as much as will his cries: "Suppose a situation of perfectly well-known pain, you will not be easily moved to tears at the sight of the afflicted person; but give him the time to tell you everything he feels and you will soon burst out in tears. Only thus do the scenes of tragedy produce their effect" (1 [10]).

1 [10]* **I have said elsewhere** "I hear it said that tragedy leads to pity through fear; so be it; but what is this pity? A fleeting and vain emotion that lasts no longer than the illusion which produced it; a vestige of natural sentiment soon stifled by the passions; a sterile pity which feeds on a few tears and which has never produced the slightest act of humanity. Thus the sanguinary Sulla cried at the account of evils he had not himself committed. Thus the tyrant of Pherae hid at the theater for fear of being seen to moan with Andromache and Priam while he heard without emotion the cries of so many unfortunates slain daily by his orders. Tacitus reports that Valerius Asiaticus, falsely accused by the order of Messalina, who wanted him to perish, defended himself before the Emperor in a way that touched this prince very deeply and drew tears from Messalina herself. She went into the next room to regain her composure after having, in the midst of her tears, whispered a warning to Vitellius not to let the accused escape. I never see one of those weeping ladies in the boxes at the theatre, so proud of their tears, without thinking of the tears of Messalina for poor Valerius Asiaticus": *Lettre à M. d'Alembert sur les spectacles* (Fuchs ed., p. 32; Bloom tr. [slightly altered], pp. 24f.; the *OC* edition omits this important addition to the 1782 printing of the *Letter* because the editor could not locate a manuscript version of it: *OC* v, 1319; see also *Second Discourse* I [36]).

1 [11] **M. Pereyre** Giacobbo Rodriguez Pereira's (1715–1780) dramatic success in teaching the deaf not only to sign, but also to speak and to

read and write, was widely admired; Buffon speaks of it at the end of his discussion of hearing in *De la nature l'homme* (*On the Nature of Man*; 1754, Duchet edition, pp. 201f.).

1 [12] **Chardin says** In *Voyages*, partially reprinted as *De Paris à Ispahan*, edited by Stéphane Yerasimos (Maspero, Paris, 1953), vol. II, p. 208.

1 [14] **Animals have a structure more than adequate** Thus, too, Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II, 11, § xi; Descartes, *Discourse on Method* V (penultimate paragraph), and Letter to Morus, 5 February 1649 (ante-penultimate paragraph, quoted by Gilson in his edition of the *Discourse on Method*, pp. 427f.); and cp. *Second Discourse*, N X [5]. **they say that it can be explained** For example, the materialist Julien Offroy de la Mettrie (1709–1751) in his *L'Homme machine*, 1748 (*Man a Machine*; edited by A. Vartanian [Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1960]), pp. 160f. (Porset).

2 [1] [*voix*] It is difficult to find a single idiomatic English equivalent for Rousseau's use of this term; here, and frequently throughout this *Essay*, *voix* means "voiced sound," "utterance," "vocalization," or even "phonation"; however, he does not here explicitly draw the distinction he draws in *Emile* between (1) the speaking or articulate voice, (2) the singing or melodic voice, and (3) the passionate or accented voice (*OC* IV, 404f., tr. 148f.). (1) corresponds to the traditional meaning of "voice" as "the voiced letters," or the vowels (see, e.g., Quintilian, *Institutes* I, v, 1), and Montaigne writes, *Il y a le nom et la chose: le nom c'est une voix qui remarque et signifie la chose* ("Of Glory," *Essays* II, 16; Montaigne, *OC* 601, tr. 468), where *voix* means "word" or "name," but also suggests "mere breath," as it does in the parallel passage in Shakespeare: "What is that honor? Air" (Falstaff, in *King Henry IV* [part 1], V: i, 143f.). Regarding (2), the singing or melodic voice, see *Dictionnaire de musique*, "Voix." And (3) the passionate or accented voice is most fully discussed in the present *Essay*: see also 5 [12].

2 [2] **It is claimed that men invented speech in order to express their needs** For example, by Condillac, *Essay* pt. II, sec. I, ch. 1, § 1, and ch. 10, § 103. Rousseau spells out his criticism of this view more fully in *Second Discourse* I [25].

3 [1] . . . **Tropes. Figurative language** Rousseau here uses "trope," "figure," and "figurative language" interchangeably, to refer, as he goes on to explain, to transpositions of the "literal," "proper," or "true" meaning of a word or expression, as, for example, when we speak of the arm of a chair.

3 [3] ***Giants*** See *Genesis* 6:4; *Numbers* 13:32, 33; *Deuteronomy* 2:20, 21; I *Samuel* 14:4; the references to men of gigantic size and to the

Patagonians "true or false," *Second Discourse*, N X [1] and [11]; the references to the Cyclopes, this *Essay* 9 [7]; Hesiod, *Theogony* 185 (and context); Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* VI, 673–679; and cp. Vico, *New Science*, §§ 121, 243, 338

4 [1] **Father Lamy** Father Bernard Lamy (1640–1715), after speculating about how men who had dropped from the sky or risen from the earth might have invented language and reporting the Greeks' conjectures on this question, adds that we, for our part, know from Scripture that men have language as a benefit from God: *La Rhétorique, ou l'art de parler*, chs. 4, 13. **meter or quantity** "In music as well as in prosody this term refers not to the number of notes or of syllables, but to their relative duration. Quantity produces rhythm, just as accent produces intonations: from rhythm and intonation result melody" (*Dictionnaire de Musique*, "Quantity").

4 [4] **many synonyms** Cp. *Second Discourse* I [29] and [31]. **persuade without convincing** In the sense in which to persuade is to move to action, and to convince is to prove or demonstrate. cp. this *Essay* 19 [2]: "In cultivating the art of convincing [men], the art of moving [them] was lost." See also Editorial Note to *Voltaire* [30]. **Plato's *Cratylus*** In which Socrates, at times playfully, explores the question of whether names are natural or conventional.

5 [3] **a twofold convention** One regarding the relation between words or sentences and their objects: this animal is called "dog"; and another regarding the relation between words or sentences and their written representations: "dog" is written d-o-g. See also the Fragment on *Pronunciation*, *OC* II, 1149.

5 [5] **savage . . . barbarian . . . and . . . civilized peoples** The same distinction as in the *Second Discourse* II [20]; it is enlarged upon in this *Essay* 9 [19]. Rousseau planned to organize a "History of Morals" in terms of it (*Fragments politiques*, *OC* III, 560, § 24); it is based on Montesquieu's distinction between "savages" as small, scattered nations, and "barbarians" as small, united nations; savage and barbarian peoples live by *moeurs* or morals, customs, and traditions, whereas civilized peoples, i.e. peoples in civil societies, live by laws (*Of the Spirit of Laws* XVIII: 11).

5 [7] **Tchelminar** or Chihil-Minar, the ancient name of Persepolis. **Chardin** *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse et Autres Lieux de l'Orient* (Amsterdam, 1735, enlarged edn.), vol. II, pp. 167f. The cuneiform writing Chardin here describes was not fully deciphered until 1846. The ***Parsees*** Chardin mentions in the second note to this paragraph are the descendants of the ancient Persians who, even after the Muslim conquest of the seventh century, contined to adhere to the Zoroastrian religion: they eat no meat (*Emile* II, *OC* IV, 411n., tr. 153n.).

5 [9] **Cadmus** For the story that Cadmus and the Phoenicians who came with him introduced the alphabet as well as much other knowledge to the Greeks, see Herodotus, *Histories* V, 58; Pliny, *Natural History* VII, 192.
5 [10]* **See Pausanias, *Arcad[ia]*** Rousseau's reference is in error; Pausanias speaks of this form of writing in his section on Eleia (*Travels* VIII, 17, VI). **Marius Victorinus** (fl. AD 350), celebrated Roman grammarian and rhetorician, and teacher of St. Jerome. Rousseau's reference is to his *De arte grammatica*, Bk. I in *Grammatici Latini* (edited by Heinrich Keil, 7 vols. [Teubner, Leipzig, 1855–1880], vol. VI [1874], pp. 55f.). The Latin ***versus*** translates the Greek *boustrophedon*; Rousseau proposed to have this way of writing reintroduced in music (see his "Letter to Dr. Burney," October 1777, nos. 2 and 3; *CC* XL, 148–150).
5 [11] **Palamedes** One of the Greek leaders in the Trojan War; **Simonides** (556–468 BC), Greek lyric poet and philosopher or sophist; the tradition of their contributions to the Greek alphabet is reported by Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* VII, 56, 192); by Isidore of Seville (*c.* AD 570–636) (*Origins* I, 3, 9); by Marius Victorinus (*De arte grammatica*, in *Grammatici Latini* [Keil edn.], VI, 194). **lustra** or lusters, the five-year periods separating the purification of the entire Roman people after each census.
5 [12] **the Gentlemen of Port Royal** Antoine Arnauld and Claude Lancelot, the authors of the *General and Systematic Grammar*, commonly known as the *Port Royal Grammar*. Duclos's discussion and list of the vowels is found in Pt. I, ch. I of his Commentary to that *Grammar*.
5 [12]* ***Greek records Vocales quas Graece septem, Romulus sex, usus posterior quinque commemorat y velut Graeca rejecta.*** **Mart[ianus] Capel[la]** (fl. early fifth century); Rousseau here quotes from his *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (Porset), a work edited by the young Hugo Grotius.
6 [1] **Bellerophon** Proitos wanted to see Bellerophon dead; however "He shrank from killing him, since his heart was awed by such action . . . but sent him away to Lykia, and handed him murderous symbols which he inscribed in a folded tablet, enough to destroy his life, and told him to show it to his wife's father, that he might perish" (Homer, *Iliad* VI, 167–170, translated by Lattimore). **Father Jean Hardouin** (1646–1729), a learned Jesuit, among whose "paradoxes" were the claims that most ancient Greek and Roman texts were medieval forgeries, and that the New Testament had originally been written in Latin. Torquato **Tasso** (1544–1595), author of the heroic epic ***Jerusalem***

Delivered. Rousseau translated portions of the poem (*OC* v, 1277–1295), and he quotes from it in a discussion of lying (*Rêveries* iv, *OC* i, 1038, tr. 56).

6 [2] **compiled . . . rather late** By Peisistratos in the second half of the sixth century BC.

7 **Prosody** From the Greek word for "accent," prosody is the study of the elements and structures involved in the rhythmic aspects of speech and is traditionally a branch of grammar (see *Dictionnaire de Musique*, "Accent").

7 [1]* **Some scholars claim** Porset points out that this note is specifically directed against the views of du Marsais, first set forth in his *Encyclopedia* article "Accent." **from Cicero's . . . *Of the Orator*:** *Hanc diligentiam subsequitur modus etiam et forma verborum, quod iam vereor ne huic Catulo videatur esse puerile. Versus enim veteres illi in hac soluta oratione propemodum, hoc est numeros quosdam nobis esse adhibendos putaverunt; interspirationes enim, non defatigationes nostrae neque librariorum notis, sed verborum et sententiarum modo interpunctas clausulas in orationibus esse voluerunt; idque princeps Isocrates instituisse fertur, ut inconditam antiquorum dicendi consuetudinem delectationis atque aurium causa, quem ad modum scribit discipulus eius Naucrates, numeris adstringeret. Namque haec duo musici, qui erant quondam idem poetae, machinati ad voluptatem sunt, versum atque cantum, ut et verborum numero et vocum modo delectatione vincerent aurium satietatem. Haec igitur duo, vocis dico moderationem et verborum conclusionem, quoad orationis severitas pati posset, a poetica ad eloquentiam traducenda duxerunt* (III, xliv, 173f.). **from Isidore's *Origins*:** *Praeterea quaedam sententiarum notae apud celeberrimos auctores fuerunt, quasque antiqui ad distinctionem scripturarum carminibus et historiis apposuerunt. Nota est figura propria in litterae modum posita ad demonstrandum unamquamque verbis sententiarumque ac versuum rationem. Notae autem versibus apponuntur numero* XXVI *quae sunt nominibus infra scriptis, etc.* (Isidore, *Etymologiarum sive originum* [Oxford, 1911; edited by W. M. Lindsay], ch. XXI, 1).

7 [2] **à [to] used as an article** Presumably in the dative of the article, as in *à la*; *à le* and *à les* by contraction yield *au* and *aux*.

7 [2]** **Buonmattei** Benedetto Buonmattei (1581–1647), Italian grammarian.

7 [8] **The ancient Hebrews** The problems of biblical interpretation which this raises are discussed by Spinoza in *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, ch. 7 (in the middle).

9 [6] **Everyone, it is said, considered himself to be master** Cp. Hobbes, *De cive* I, 10, 11; Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, ch. 16 (beginning) and n. 26; cp. also *Second Discourse* I [35].

9 [7] **the Cyclops** The race of giant shepherds with one eye in the middle of their foreheads – hence their name – whose leader Polyphemus kept Odysseus and his companions prisoners in his cave by blocking its entrance with a huge boulder. He had devoured some of the men when Odysseus blinded him and, by a ruse, succeeded in escaping together with his surviving companions (Homer, *Odyssey* IX, 112–115); on the primitive existence of the Cyclopes, see Plato, *Laws* III, 680 a–c; Aristotle, *Politics* I, 2, 1252b, 17ff., and *Nicomachean Ethics* X, 9, 1180a 25–32; Strabo, *Geography* XIII, 1, 24a. On the life of Odysseus and his campanions among the Cyclopes as the image of life under despotic rule, see *SC* I 4 [3]; and Locke, *Treatises* II, 19, § 228.

9 [8] **Cain was a tiller** *Genesis* 4:3. **Noah planted a vineyard** *Genesis* 9:20. **Cain became a fugitive** *Genesis* 4:12. **the wandering life of Noah's descendants** *Genesis* 10, 11. **the Scythians in their wagons** Herodotus, *Histories* IV, 46.

9 [9] **lived solely off acorns** Which Pelasgos taught them to eat (see Pausanias, *Travels* VIII, "Arkadia," I, vi); later Triptolemos taught agriculture to King Arkos – for whom the Pelasgians were now named Arkadians (*ib.* IV, i; cp. Plato, *Laws* III, 782b). On the introduction of agriculture, see the *Second Discourse* II [20]–[23].

9 [10] **Abraham served a calf** *Genesis* 18:7; **Eumaeus** served Ulysses piglets, not kids (Homer, *Odyssey* XIV, 72–80). **Rebecca did the same** or, more precisely, she instructed her youngest son, Jacob, to do so after overhearing her husband, Isaac, promise their older son, Esau, that he would be blessed if he brought him some meat (*Genesis* 27:9).

9 [11] **first cake . . . the communion of mankind** This striking remark refers to the transition from nomadic to settled life described in *Second Discourse* II [22]; its biblical echoes – *Genesis* 18:6, cp. *Genesis* 19:3 – amplify the reference to the Abraham story in the preceding paragraph. **Passover** *Exodus* 12:39, 13:3–10, *Deuteronomy* 16:8.

9 [12] **Job's wealth . . . the Sabeans carried them off** *Job* 1:3, 14f.

9 [13] **Scripture lists ten generations** Ten generations separate Noah's children and Abraham (*Genesis* 10:1, 11:10–29).

9 [14] **Adam spoke** *Genesis* 2:19–20, 3:10, 3:12. **Noah spoke** *Genesis* 9:25–27. **the common language perished** *Genesis* 11:1, 11:6. **even if there had never been a tower of [B]abel** As, indeed, the biblical account suggests (*Genesis* 10:5, 10:20, 10:31–32).

9 [15] **born of the earth** The earth-born giants, in Hesiod (*Theogony* 185); Pelasgos, in Pausanias (*Travels* VIII, 1, iv); Deucalion's earth-born generation, in Ovid (*Metamorphoses* I, 384–413); Cadmus's (*ib.* III, 106–115); see also Plato (*Republic* III, 414d–e, cp. *Menexenus* 237d–238a) and Isocrates (*Panegyricus* 24); Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* (V,

821–823, 1402, 1411); consider also Hobbes, *De cive* VIII, 1, and this *Essay* 9 [22]: "assume men issuing from the hands of nature," and 9 [36]: "were men born of the earth before that time?"

9 [18] **the ark and the tabernacle of Moses** *Exodus* 26:14, *Numbers* 4:25. **Moses ... appears to have disapproved of agriculture** In writing the Pentateuch, he has **God reject his [Cain's] offerings** *Genesis* 4:2–7.

9 [20] **the earliest morals** "Earliest" here translates *premier(s)*, which has elsewhere consistently been translated "first," as in "first ages," or "first men"; in the present context *moeurs*, which has been translated "morals" throughout, is best understood as "**ways** [of life]."

9 [22] **Assume perpetual spring** As, Pufendorf says, the pagan poets did, not knowing of the earthly paradise (*Droit* II, 2, § 2); indeed, he borrowed the expression "perpetual spring" from Ovid's description of it (*Metamorphoses* I, 107).

9 [23] **He who willed ... inclined the globe's axis** Which makes for the cycle of the seasons. Rousseau's reflections on the subject are developed further in an important fragment, *OC* III, 529–533.

9 [25] **Chaldea** The province of southern Babylonia situated between the lower Euphrates, the head of the Persian Gulf, and the Arabian Desert. **Phoenicia** The mountainous strip along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea; the Phoenicians were great travelers and traders.

9 [26] **It is natural, it is said** By Montesquieu, *Of the Spirit of Laws* XVIII: 3; Rousseau's discussion of the influence of terrain on modes of life takes up many of the points, examples and even expressions in this book *Of the Spirit of Laws*. **Magna Graecia** The Greek mainland cities together with their far-flung colonies. **the Attic people ... called itself Autochthonous** For example, Isocrates, in *Panegyricus* 24; the Athenians alone withstood the invasions by the Doric tribes from the North. **the factory of mankind** "The Goth Jornandes has called northern Europe the factory of mankind. I would rather call it the factory of the instruments that break the chains forged in the south. It is there that are formed the valiant nations that set out from their country to destroy tyrants and slaves, and to teach men that nature having made them equal, reason could make them dependent only for the sake of their happiness": Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws* XVII, 5 (near the end).

9 [27] **The ... ancient traditions about natural disasters** E.g., *Genesis* 7:10–8:14; Plato, *Statesman* 269a–274e, *Timaeus* 22a–25d, *Critias* 112a, *Laws* III 677a–d; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, 8, 1074a 10–14, *Politics* VII, 10, 1329b 25–30; Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* V, 380–415, Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I, 253–312.

9 [29]* **fugitive prehuman socity** Appears to be an allusion to Helvétius, *De l'esprit*, Discours premier, ch. 1. (Porset).
9 [30]* **the well of the Oath** or Beersheba, in *Genesis* 21:25–33.
9 [31] **The chaos which the Poets feigned among the elements** See Hesiod, *Theogony* 116, Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I, 5–32; cp. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* II, 118–122. Descartes uses the same expression – "a chaos as confused as the poets might feign" – to describe the starting point of his own cosmology, in *Discourse on Method* V (Gilson edn.), 42: 23f. **did reign among its productions** Lucretius, *op. cit.*, V, 243f., 380f.; and for Rousseau's argument in this paragraph and the next, consider *ib.*, V, 380–415.
9 [32]* **It is claimed** by Buffon in "Le Boeuf" ("The Ox," 1753), *OP*, pp. 358 b 6–359 a 15; "Les animaux carnivores" ("The Carnivorous Animals," 1758), *ib.* pp. 366 b 25–367 a 10, 373 a 32–377 a 44; and "Le Lièvre" ("The Hare," 1765), *ib.* pp. 363–365. For a discussion, see V. Gourevitch, "'The First Times' in Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* (1986) 11:123–146, pp. 136–141.
9 [36]* **The first men . . . marry their sisters** After canvassing this traditional problem at length, Pufendorf concludes that such marriages cannot be held to violate either natural right or the biblical account of the beginnings (*Droit* VI, 1, § xxxiv); so, too, Grotius, *Right* II, 5, § xiii, ¶5, 6, 7; and even Cumberland, *Loix* VIII, § 9; cp. Plato, *Republic* V, 460e–461e with *Laws* VIII, 838a–c.
12 [1] **Around the fountains which I have mentioned** In this *Essay* 9 [35]–[36].
12 [2] **The first stories . . .in verse** For example, Plutarch: "There was a time when people used for the currency of speech, verses and tunes and songs, converting into music and poetry, all history, all philosophy, every passion, and to speak generally, every circumstance that required more dignified utterance. For things that nowadays few people listen to, everybody then used to hear, and took pleasure in their being sung; 'ploughmen and flowers too,' as Pindar hath it": *On the Pythian Responses* (translated by C. W. King), 24f. **says Strabo** (63 BC–AD 24), in *Geography* I, 2, 6.
12 [2]** ***Architas and Aristoxenus*** *Architas atque Aristoxenus etiam subjectam grammaticen musicae putaverunt, et eosdem utriusque rei praeceptores fuisse . . . Tum Eupolis apud quem Prodamus et musicen et litteras docet. Et Maricas, qui est Hyperbolus, nihil se ex musicis scire nisi litteras confitetur*, in M. Fabius Quintilian (AD c. 35–c. 100), *Institutes* I, X, 17f. Rousseau's most striking departure from Quintilian's text is that he speaks of Architas and Aristoxenus, where Quintilian speaks of Architas

and Evenus. Architas (fl. *c.* 400 BC), Pythagorean philosopher and statesman who helped Plato escape from the court of Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse (Plato, *Seventh Letter*, 350 a–b); Evenus (fl *c.* 400 BC), poet, sophist, and rhetorician who taught "the virtue of man and citizen" for a mere 5 minae (Plato, *Apology of Socrates* 29b, cp. *Phaedo* 60d); Aristoxenus (fl. *c.* 318 BC), Aristotelian philosopher who held that judgment of musical intervals rests on what we perceive, and not, as the Pythagoreans maintained, on mathematical ratios; on *le jugement de l'oreille* rather than on *le calcul* is how Rousseau put it in the article "Aristoxéniens" of his *Dictionnaire de Musique*; see also "Intervalle" and "Pythagoréciens." The disagreement between Rousseau and Rameau in many respects parallels that ancient quarrel between the Aristoxenians and the Pythagoreans. ***Prodamus*** and ***Maricas*** are dramatic characters in comedies by ***Eupolis*** (*c.* 445–411 BC); and, as Quintilian points out, the character called Maricas represents the fifth-century Athenian demagogue ***Hyperbolus***.

12 [4] Pierre-Jean **Burette** (1664–1747), the physician and antiquary who wrote extensively on the music of the ancients, translated and commented on Plutarch's dialogue *Of Music*, to which Rousseau refers in chapter 19 of this *Essay*.

12 [4]* **Abbé Jean Terrasson** (1670–1750), in *Dissertation critique sur l'Iliade d'Homère* (Porset). **Amphion** Son of Zeus and Antiope, whose music was said to have caused the stones to move into place by themselves and form the wall protecting Thebes; e.g., Pausanias, *Travels* IX, 30, *iii*.

12 [5] **such very different instruments** In the sense in which a singer's voice is his "instrument."

13 [1] **a touching painting . . . an etching** Before photography, etchings provided the only means for reproductions of the image. "Paintings are all fated to perish. Cold, heat, air, and worms have already destroyed many. It is up to etching to preserve what can be saved." (Diderot, "Salon de 1765," in *Salons* II, edited by Jean Seznec [Clarendon, Oxford, 1979], p. 227).

13 [5] **the experiment with the prism** Newton first reported his experiments analyzing natural light into its component colors in 1672. His full discussion appeared in the *Opticks, or a Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections, and Colours of Light* (1704).

14 [2] **harmony properly so called** Rousseau develops the point at greater length in his *Examen de deux principes avancés par M. Rameau*: *OC* V, 345–366.

14 [4] **M. Rameau contends** Jean Philippe Rameau (1683–1764), in *Traité de l'harmonie* (1722), and in many subsequent writings; the

disagreement between Rousseau and Rameau was long-standing, and it led to sometimes acrimonious exchanges, not only between the principals, but also between their partisans and mediators. It was certainly embittered by personal pique and antipathy. But that should not obscure the fact that it involves fundamental issues in the theory of music and of the fine arts in general.

14 [7] **if he wished to make frogs croak he would have to make them sing** Starobinski thinks this is a direct jab at Rameau, who has a choir of frogs croak in his *Platée* (1745).

15 [3] **Tarantula bites** The bite of these poisonous spiders was said to cause sluggishness and melancholy which could be dispelled only by vigorous movements or dancing; hence the tarantella. Nicolas **Bernier's** (1664–1734) **Cantatas** Some of which Rousseau recalls studying and learning by heart in his early twenties (*Conf.* V, *OC* I, 184).

15 [5] **one sense ... without ... moral component** In writing this sharp criticism of gluttony, Rousseau may have remembered that the materialist La Mettrie had died in 1751 from overeating.

16 [1] **The analysis of sound ... the analysis of light** Newton himself repeatedly called attention to possible correspondences between them: "May not the harmony and discord of Colours arise from the proportions of the Vibrations propagated through the Fibres of the optick Nerves into the Brain, as the harmony and discord of sound arise from the proportions of the Vibrations of the Air? For some Colours, if they be view'd together, are agreeable to one another, as those of Gold and Indigo, and others disagree" (*Opticks* III, pt. i, qu. 14; see also I, II, prop. III, prob. I; II, I, ob. 14; II, III, prop. XVI). **the famous clavichord** By the Jesuit Louis Bertrand Castel (1688–1757), teacher of mathematics and physics, who in a work entitled *Optique des couleurs* (1740) suggested matching tones to colors and so to "play" pictures. He built a prototype of such an "ocular clavichord" and exhibited it in Paris in 1739, but he never succeeded in making it play properly. Rousseau had known Castel when he first came to Paris (*Conf.* VII, *OC* I, 283, 288f., 326). Castel published a criticism of Rousseau's *Letter on French Music*, and another of the *Second Discourse*, entitled *L'Homme moral opposé à l'homme physique de M. R**** (Toulouse, 1756).

16 [3] **not the mechanical flutist ... but the engineer** Jacques de Vaucanson (1709–1782) built and, in 1738, exhibited a widely admired mechanical toy flutist. Voltaire compared its maker to Prometheus; so did La Mettrie, who thought the device proved the possibility of a talking machine and hence of his materialist understanding of man (in *L'homme machine*, ed. Vartanian, p. 190). Rousseau had met Vaucanson: see his letter to de Conzié of 17 January 1742 (*CC* I, 139, no. 43).

16 [6] **harmony of the heavenly spheres** The Pythagorean view that in their revolutions the heavenly spheres cause a music which we cannot hear because the noise of the world drowns it out; for a summary and criticism, see Aristotle, *On the Heavens* (II, 9, 290b 12–291a 22), and cp. *Metaphysics* (I, 5, 985b 23–986a 7); Quintilian, *Institutes* I, X, 12. Rameau appealed to the Pythagorean tradition in support of his claim that harmony, as he understands it, is "natural"; see, e.g., *Démonstration du principe de l'harmonie* (1750) in *Complete Theoretical Writings of Jean Philippe Rameau*, edited by E. R. Jacobi (American Institute of Musicology, 1967–1972), vol. III, 157f., and *Nouvelles réflexions sur le principe sonore*, *ib.*, vol. IV, p. 213.
18 [1] **songs of American savages** One of which Rousseau included in his *Dictionnaire de Musique* under the heading "Songs of Canadian Savages". *OC* V, 1190.
18 [3] **they would have called the second *do re* a consonance** Because *re* forms a perfect consonance with the unsounded *sol*, according to standard pitch relations. I am indebted to Mr. Robert Burns for this note.
18 [4] **pathetic forms** "Dramatic and theatrical musical form which tends to depict and to arouse great passions, especially suffering and sadness . . . True *pathos* resides in a passionate accent which is not determined by rules but which genius finds and the heart feels without its being possible for art to formulate any law regarding it" (*Dictionnaire de Musique*, "Pathétique").
19 [2] **Menallipides . . . Plutarch** In the dialogue *On Music* traditionally attributed – and now believed to have been misattributed to Plutarch (AD *c.* 46–*c.* 120), the fifth-century BC poet Menallipides and the early fourth-century BC poet **Philoxenus** are said to have broken with traditional musical practice. Indeed, Philoxenus's play *Cyclopes* evidently created a sensation by calling for a sung solo by the Cyclops. The dialogue goes on to quote a speech from **Pherecrates**'s (fl. 440–420 BC) *Chiron*, in which Music tells the story of her fall from being poetry and music united, to being music "alone" (*De musica* 30, 1141c–1142a). Condillac, in contrast to Rousseau, speaking about this and similar texts, derides such an attachment to old ways (*Essay* pt. II, sec. I, ch. 8, § 73, pp. 229f.). **Plato, jealous of Homer and Euripides** Plato's Socrates, speaking of the traditional quarrel between poetry and philosophy, prefaces a criticism of Homer with the remark that while he has honored him since boyhood, he honors truth more (*Republic* X, 595 b–c): he had Socrates criticize Euripides (480–408 BC) by name earlier in the dialogue (*Republic* VIII, 568 a–b); according to tradition, Plato himself began by writing tragedies (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* III, 6).

19 [4] **The Emperor Julian,** surnamed the Apostate (332–363), had been a general in Gaul; Starobinski refers to his *Misopogon* 337c, and to various contemporaries of Rousseau's who cite or paraphrase the remark.
19 [7] **did not know the principle of an effect which they knew** Namely, why they found pleasant the chords which they did find pleasant. **verbiage in Jean de Muris** or Jehan des Murs (*c.* 1300–*c.* 1350); the encyclopedic compendium of medieval musical knowledge, the *Speculum musicae*, traditionally attributed to him, is now attributed to his somewhat older contemporary, Jacques de Liège (*c.* 1260–*c.* 1330). Giovanni Andrea Angelini, known as *Bontempi* (*c.* 1624–1705), composer, poet, musicologist, author of an *Historia musicae* (Perugia, 1695), which Rousseau read in 1737 and which first aroused his interest in the history and theory of music (*Conf.* VI, *OC* I, 246).
19 [7]* **M. Tartini has confirmed** Giuseppe Tartini (1692–1770), composer, violinist, and musical theorist whose works on harmony greatly influenced Rousseau.
19 [9] **doubly the voice of nature** I.e. the appropriate or "natural" imitation of spontaneous or natural sounds and utterings; see especially this *Essay* 14 [7].
20 [1] **Societies have assumed their final forms** or "final form"; the ms. reads *dernière formes*.
20 [3] **Among the ancients . . . in a public square** Also, *SC* III 15 [9]; so, too, Condillac, *Essay* pt. II, ch. 3, §§ 28f.; by contrast, Aristotle, discussing the proper size for a polis, remarks that if it is too large, "who can give it orders unless he has Stentor's voice?" (*Politics* VIII, 4, 1326b 6f., cp. V, 5, 1305a 8–15). **M. d'Alembert** published an *Elements of Music . . . according to the Principles of M. Rameau* in 1752.
20 [5]* ***Remarques sur la gram[maire] génér[ale] et raison[née]*** referred to in Editorial Note to this *Essay*, 5 [12] above.

Idea of the Method in the Composition of a Book (pages 300–304)

Charly Guyot, the editor of the *OC* edition of this essay, thinks it was written about 1745: *OC* II, pp. ci, 1933. The manuscript is at Harvard.
[6] **synthesis . . . analysis**: Rousseau's brief description of the two methods closely follows the language of the so-called *Port Royal Logic* (Antoine Arnault and Pierre Nicole, *Logic, or the Art of Thinking*, translated and edited by Jill Vance Booker, CUP, Cambridge, 1996; first edition, 1662), Part IV, chapter II, near the beginning; his illustration of these methods in terms of a genealogy corresponds to the example in § 4 of that chapter; the parallel has also been noted by Goldschmidt,

Anthropologie et politique, p. 31. For further references, see G. Tonelli, "Analysis and Synthesis in 18th Century Philosophy Prior to Kant," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* (1979), 20:178–213, and R. Kennington, "Analytic and Synthetic Methods in Spinoza's *Ethics*," in R. Kennington ed., *The Philosophy of Baruch Spinoza* (The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, 1980), pp. 293–318. Rousseau consistently criticizes the analytic method: see especially [10] below, and *On War* [13] with Editorial Notes, and the Introduction to *SC* tr.

[10] **Because two or three madmen daily kill themselves in London** ... Compare, "... it was a good answer that was made by one who when they showed him hanging in a temple a picture of those who had paid their vows as having escaped shipwreck, and who would have him say whether he would not now acknowledge the power of the gods. – 'Aye,' asked he again, 'but where are they painted who drowned after their vows?'" Bacon, *Novum Organum*, The First Book of Aphorisms, no. xlvi.

[11] **Semiramis**, the mythical Assyrian Queen noted for her wisdom and beauty who is said to have founded Babylon, and established its hanging gardens; **Alexander** the Great; **Judith** the Jewish heroine who delivered her people by trapping and slaying Holofernes, a general of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Nineveh; **Scaevola** ... **Lucretia** ... **Cato Utican**: all three are also mentioned in *Last Reply* [51]–[53]; **Anacreon** (*c*. 570–485), Greek poet of light and graceful lyrics; **Sappho** (fl. *c*. 600), greatly admired, prolific lyric poet.

What is the Virtue a Hero Most Needs (pages 305–316)

Proposed in 1751. Rousseau misremembered the date: the subject was announced in the November 1750 issue of the *Mercure de France* (Pichois and Pintard, *Jean-Jacques entre Socrate et Caton*, p. 60, n. 9). The *Discourse* was first published in an unauthorized and defective version in Fréron's *L'Année Littéraire*, vol. VII, 1768. It was reprinted by various publishers the following year. The full, authoritative text was first published in the posthumous Du Peyrou-Moultou 1782 edition of Rousseau's *Works*. That is the version reproduced in *OC* II, 1262–1274, edited by Charly Guyot, and translated here.

[1] This brief prefatory "Notice" echoes sentiments Rousseau also expressed in several letters he wrote at the time of the first, unauthorized publications of this *Discourse*; see to Du Peyrou, 18 January 1769, to Henri Laliaud on the same date, and to his publisher M.-M. Rey, 31 January 1769 (*CC* XXXVII, 32f.; 33f.; 34–37).

[2] **If I were not *Alexander*, said that Conqueror, I would want to be *Diogenes***; quoting (without attribution) Bacon, *The Advancement*

of Learning, Book I (*The Works*. Popular Edition, based on the Complete Edition of Spedding, Ellis and Heath, New York, 1878; vol. I, pt. III, p. 155), based on Seneca, *De beneficiis* IV. In an earlier draft, Rousseau had gone on: "Socrates [*sic*] would not have said: if I were not what I am, I would like to be Alexander; there were reasons on the Monarch's side; there were no fewer on the Philosopher's. Which one of them should then have prevailed? Let us dare settle this great question; and before speaking of Heroism, let us try to situate it in the order of moral things. Short of this first step, how could we assign to it the virtues that suit it, and choose among them?" Indeed, throughout much of the present *Discourse* Rousseau is engaged in a discussion with Bacon's exploration of human good, and especially of "the diversity between a philosophical and a civil life" in Book II of the *Advancement*. Bacon's conclusion is summarized by Pufendorf in the context of his important discussion of "sociability": *Droit* II, 3, § XV.

[5] **Socrates . . . Thrasybulus** On Socrates under the ruthless rule of the Thirty Tyrants (404–403 BC); Xenophon, *Hellenica* II, 3 and 4, Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I, 30–39; Plato, *Apology of Socrates* 31d–33c; Socrates argues that he could and did do more good by leading a private rather than a public or political life. Thrasybulus, leader of the democratic party, was banished by the Thirty; with the help of the Thebans he restored the democracy in 403 BC: Xenophon, *Hellenica* II, 4. **and *Plato* . . . at a Tyrant's court** For Plato's account of his three trips to Syracuse – between 388 and 361 BC – in attempts to moderate first the tyranny of Dionysius the Elder, and then that of his son and successor Dionysius the Younger, see primarily his *Seventh Letter*. **was compelled to relinquish to another**, namely, to his friend and disciple, Dion, in 357 BC **the glory of delivering Syracuse from the yoke of tyranny**, as Aristotle reports him to have put it: *Politics*, V 10, 1312a 32–39; see Plutarch, *Dion*.

[9] **the soldiers of *Cadmus*** Cadmus slew a dragon and, on Athena's advice, sowed its teeth; from which grew up soldiers who slew each other until only five were left, who became the first Thebans.

[14] **the Temple of *Janus*** of *Janus Geminus*, in the Roman Forum; opened in time of war, and closed in time of peace.

[16] ***Catiline* . . . attempted to ruin his Fatherland** by conspiring against Rome; he displayed **the most unshakable fearlessness** in the battle Rome waged against his forces and in which he perished in early 62 BC; ***Cromwell* . . . enslaved his** upon dissolving Parliament in 1655 and becoming Lord Protector of England and Ireland; his **most unshakable fearlessness** was proverbial; Milton, his sometime secretary, spoke of his "matchless fortitude."

[17] Gaius *Marius* (*c.* 157–86 BC), highly successful and ruthless general, six times elected Consul of Rome, he was the first to allow anyone, regardless of status, to enlist in the Roman army, thus creating a professional volunteer army: cp. *Pol. Ec.* [55], *SC* IV 4 [18], *Poland* 12 [9]; in a coup in partnership with L. Cornelius Cinna (85 BC), he caused a bloodbath of the noblest of Rome's aristocracy; see Plutarch's *Life of Marius*. *Totila* King of the Ostrogoths, he took Rome in 546, and again in 550 when he engaged in a scorched earth policy; *Tamerlane* (1336–1405) founded the Second Mogul Empire; setting out from Samarkand in Central Asia, his conquests extended to Turkey in the West, and China in the East.

[18] *Charles V* or Charles Quint (1500–1558), initially (1516) Charles I, King of Spain and of her dependencies, Flanders, Austria, and Germany, he was elected Holy Roman Emperor (1516), assuming the name Charles V. He spent much of his forty-year reign engaged in often far-flung wars, but also with his neighbor, Francis I of France. *Ajax* the Greek hero second only to Achilles **terrifies** *Hector* the foremost Trojan hero: *Iliad* VII, 216f; *Hector* **terrifies** *Ajax*, *Iliad* XI, 544–574; **and flees from** *Achilles*: *Iliad* XXII, 136–253. *Antiochus* **III**, surnamed *the Great* (*c.* 242–187 BC), king of Syria, conquered or reconquered much of greater Syria and Palestine by 198; but when he crossed into Greece, he was twice defeated and humiliated by the Romans. **The conqueror of the three parts of the World** Pompey or Pompeius Magnus (108–48 BC) **lost his heart and head at Pharsala** in battle with Caesar in 48 BC. Gaius Julius *Caesar* (100–44 BC) **himself was moved at Dyrrhachium** (the modern Durazzo, on the Albanian coast) where he was forced to abandon the siege of Pompey's forces and to retreat in early 48 BC **and afraid at Munda**, in 45 BC, where his troops were in danger of being routed before they decisively defeated the sons of Pompey in what proved to be Caesar's last campaign. **The victor over** *Brutus*, Marc Antony, at Philippi, in 42 BC, **cowardly fled** together with Cleopatra **from** *Octavius* (Octavian) Caesar who defeated his fleet off Actium in 32 BC.

[19] *Alexander* or *Porus*: although Alexander defeated King Porus of India in 323 BC, his ". . . last battle against King Porus killed the Macedonians' hearts, and made them that they had no desire to go any farther to conquer India . . . [and] in the end he took pity of them, and was content to return": Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 62 (translated by North), cp. Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, v, 29; *Pyrrhus* or *Fabricius*: Pyrrhus (319–272 BC), King of Epirus, a great warrior; he several times defeated Rome's armies, but Rome would not sue for peace, hence "Pyrrhic victory"; eventually Fabricius (see *First Discourse*

[32]) negotiated his withdrawal from Italy. ***Antony* or *Brutus*** the partisan of Caesar who offered him the Crown, or one of Caesar's executioners who, when he was defeated by Antony at Philippi in 42 BC, took his own life because he did not wish to survive the Republic. ***Francis I* in chains or *Charles V* triumphant** The forces of Francis I of France, besieging the garrison of Charles V of Spain in Pavia, were decisively defeated on 25 February 1525, and the King was taken prisoner and brought to Madrid where, under the circumstances, he agreed to the Treaty of Madrid (January 1526) by which he relinquished his claims to Milan, Naples, and Burgundy. Charles appeared to have definitely removed the only serious rival to his power. However, in order to implement the treaty, Francis had to be allowed to return to France, and as soon as he was back home, he revoked all the agreements and concessions he had made while a prisoner. Within the year, Charles's triumph had turned hollow. ***Valois* victorious or *Coligny* vanquished**: Admiral Gaspard de Coligny (1519–1572), a man of great valor, converted to Protestantism and became one of the chiefs of the Protestant party; he was one of the first victims of the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre of Protestants on the night of 24 August 1572; the King, Charles IX of the House of Valois, was a somewhat reluctant party to the massacre, which had been plotted by his mother, Catherine de Medici (1519–1589), and Henri de Guise (1550–1588); he died soon after it (1574), racked by remorse. The Saint Bartholomew's Day masssacre put an end to the Valois line, and religious peace was only restored in 1598, when Henry IV, the first of the House of Bourbon to accede to the throne of France, issued the Edict of Nantes, granting Protestants full religious, civil, and political rights. The Edict was revoked by Louis XIV in 1685. See, in this connection, Rousseau's discussion of the marriage of Protestants, in *SC* IV 8.

[20] **the Lawgiver of Sparta** Lycurgus **who . . . return[ed] the crown to its legitimate possessor** his nephew, Charilaus: Plutarch, *Lycurgus* III, 6, 9; **the gentle and peaceful Citizen** again Lycurgus **who was able to avenge the injuries done him** by Alcander **not by the offender's death, but by turning him into an honest man?** *ib.* 11. **the oraclen . . . that granted him almost divine honors** *ib.* 5.4 **the man who made Heroes of all his compatriots** i.e. still Lycurgus; **the Lawgiver of Athens**, Solon (*c.* 639–559 BC), **who was able to keep his freedom and virtue at the very Court of Tyrants** i.e. of Peisistratus: Plutarch, *Solon* XXXIX, 1–XXXI, 5 **and dared maintain to the face of an opulent Monarch**, i.e. Croesus, King of Lydia, **that power and riches do not make a man happy**: *ib.* XXVII, 1–XXVIII, 6, Herodotus, *Histories* I, 29–33. **the greatest of Romans**

and the most virtuous of men ... this model among citizens Cato the Younger **to whom alone the oppressor of the Fatherland** Julius Caesar **did the honor to hate him enough to take up the pen against him, even after his death?** by publishing an *Anti-Cato*, Plutarch, *Caesar* LIV, 3–6 **of a body of warriors he formed a society of wise, equitable and moderate men** by his reform of Pompey's army: Plutarch, *Cato* LIII, 5–6; *Pompey* LXIII, 1.

[21] ***Augustus.*** Octavian, or Augustus Caesar (63 BC–AD 14), Julius Caesar's great-nephew and adopted son, who became the first of the Roman Emperors and one on whom the Senate bestowed the title Augustus (in 27 BC). **He did not gather the laurels that made him immortal off the coast of Actium** where he defeated Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BC **or on the plains of Philippi** where together with Antony he defeated Brutus and Cassius in 42 BC, **but [by] ... the equity of his laws and the pardon of** C. Cornelius ***Cinna,*** the great-grandson of Pompey, who had plotted against him: Seneca, *On Clemency* IX, retold by Montaigne, *Essays* XXIV (Montaigne, *OC* 123–125, tr. 91f.) and the central action of Corneille's tragedy *Cinna* (1643). **The greatest Captain in the world** Julius Caesar **dies assassinated in the middle of the Senate** on the ides of March, 44 BC **for having wished to add a vain title** namely "King" **to real power; and the odious author of the proscriptions** or list of enemies, which Octavian, later the Emperor Augustus, together with Antony and Lepidus, published at the beginning of their Triumvirate in 43 BC, and a result of which some 200 Equites and 300 Senators were murdered, **eradicating his crimes by dint of justice and clemency, became the father of his Fatherland which he had devastated, and dies adored by the Romans he had enslaved** by establishing the Empire in place of the Republic.

[22] **the Philosophic and beneficent warrior who ... makes the sciences and the fine arts shine among you with Royal magnificence** The Marquis de Cursay, who pacified Corsica in 1748; the island was, at the time, a possession of Genoa, against which it had repeatedly risen in armed rebellion. The Genoese asked for help from their French allies, who sent in troops in 1738, and again in 1747 under de Cursay. It was he who also restored the Academy of the *Vagabondi* at Bastia in 1749. The present *Discourse* was written in response to a Prize Question proposed by that Academy. In the "Preface to *Narcissus*," which he wrote in the winter of 1752–1753, Rousseau speaks of the Bastia Academy as an instrument with which to subjugate the Corsicans: *Narcissus* [23]* with Editorial Note; Pichois and Pintard, *Jean-Jacques entre Socrate et Caton*, pp. 59–62. A decade later he wrote

in the *Social Contract*, "There is one country left in Europe capable of receiving legislation; it is the island of Corsica. The valor and steadfastness with which this brave people was able to recover and defend its freedom, would amply deserve that some wise man taught it to preserve it. I rather suspect that this small island will one day astound Europe" (*SC* II 10 [6]). This brief paragraph led to his being invited in 1764 to make proposals for the island's governance. He probably wrote his *Project of a Constitution for Corsica* in the following year. The first complete version was edited and published by Vaughan in 1915.

[24] **The Soldier of the North** probably Charles XII (1682–1718), King of Sweden (1697–1718), **with narrow genius and limitless courage had, by the middle of his career, irretrievably lost a glory acquired by prodigious feats of valor and generosity**: after early defeating the King of Denmark, Peter the Great of Russia, and the Poles, Charles waged a second war against Peter, which he lost; a defeat that marked the decline of Sweden and the rise of Russia as a great power; Voltaire wrote his *History*. **the murderer of *Charles Stuart*** Oliver Cromwell, who played the leading role in the trial and execution of Charles I, King of England and of Scotland 1625–1649.

[25] **The knight *Bayard***, Pierre du Terrail (1473–1525), renowned French soldier known as "fearless and blameless" (*sans peur et sans reproche*). Louis Dominique Bourguignon, *alias* **Cartouche** (1693–1721), notorious highwayman; in the *Observations* [53] Rousseau compares him favorably with Cromwell. **valiant and unfortunate People that has for so long filled Europe with the clamor of your exploits and your miseries** The Corsicans; see Editorial Note to [22] above.

[26] **I have attacked a dangerous and too widely held opinion** namely, that the defining feature of heroism is courage, or that courage is the – Baconian – form of heroism; **I have not the same reasons for following the method of exclusions in all of its details** Regarding this method, see Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, The Second Book of Aphorisms, especially nos. xvi–xix. While he does not follow it in all of its details, it is the method Rousseau continues to follow in this *Discourse*. ***Epictetus***, Stoic philosopher (first century), was a slave; see Editorial Note to [38] below. This comparison between ***Caesar*** and Epictetus parallels, and amplifies, the comparison between Alexander and Diogenes with which this *Discourse* begins.

[29] ***Alexander*, whom this frightful vice** namely, intemperance, **covered with his friend's blood** Alexander's step-brother and friend, Kleitos, had saved his life at the battle of Granicus, 334 BC. At a banquet, in 328, Kleitos taunted Alexander for assuming Persian dress and

ways. Alexander, intoxicated with drink, killed Kleitos; and immediately regretted his action. *Caesar*['s] . . . **profligacies** are detailed two paragraphs below.

[30] **Montaigne**: quoting *Essays* I, 24 (*OC* 128 near the end; Frame, translating very freely, pp. 94f.); this is also the essay in which Montaigne tells the episode about Augustus and Cinna mentioned earlier in this *Discourse* ([21]); *OC* incorrectly refers to *Essays* I, 23, followed, as usual, by the Intégrale (Launay) edition.

[31] **Alexander . . . was chaste; but was he sober?** On the distinction between temperance, moderation and sobriety, see also *Dialogues*, *OC* I, 807. **Did not this rival of India's first conqueror** Darius, King of Persia (522–485 BC), pushed his conquests in India as far as the Kabul and Indus rivers: Herodotus, *Histories* IV, 44; **imitate his profligacies? did he not combine them, when at the prompting of a Courtesan he burned down the Palace at Persepolis?** In 331 BC, during a revel, Alexander, prompted by Thaïs, set fire to the palace of Persepolis; he immediately regretted his action. **O, had he but had a Mistress!** i.e. had he but not been chaste, **He would not have killed his friend during his fatal debauchery.** On Alexander and Kleitos, see Editorial Note to [29] above. **Caesar . . . exposed Rome to unheard of prostitution and changed sex at pleasure?** Suetonius ends his long account of Caesar's sexual conduct by quoting a contemporary remark that Caesar was every woman's man and every man's woman: *Lives of the Caesars*, Julius Caesar, 45–52. **Alcibiades** (450–404 BC) **had every sort of intemperance and was nonetheless one of the great men of Greece** As all the accounts of him emphasize: Plato, *Symposium* 212d–222d and *Alcibiades* I, cp. *Republic* VI, 494a–495b; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian Wars*, V–VIII; Xenophon, *Hellenica* I; Plutarch, *Alcibiades*. **Even the elder Cato** (234–149 BC) **loved money and wine. He had abject vices**: ". . . to sell slaves in that sort, or to turn them out of doors when you have had the service of their youth, and that they are grown old, as you would use brute beasts that have served whilst they may for age: me thinks that must needs proceed of too severe and greedy nature, that hath no longer regard or consideration of humanity, than whilst one is able to do another good": Plutarch, *Marcus Cato* V (translated by North).

[32] ***Caesar, Alexander, Pyrrhus, Hannibal*** Hannibal is the only one in this list whom Rousseau had not mentioned before in this *Discourse*; Machiavelli speaks of his "inhuman cruelty": *Prince* XVII (edited by Quentin Skinner and Russell Price [Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, 1989], p. 60).

[33] **strength of soul or fortitude** *Force d'âme*, literally translated, gives "strength of soul," an expression which fails to evoke the immedi-

ate echo of *force*; "fortitude" does evoke it, but loses the direct reference to the soul, in a text in which Rousseau is very explicitly discussing various kinds or qualities of souls: greatness of soul, pettiness of soul ... I shall therefore render *force d'âme*, here and in the few other places where the expression occurs, as "strength of soul or fortitude"; and when Rousseau abbreviates *force d'âme* to *force*, as he does in the immediate sequel, I shall translate it as "fortitude." Rousseau had initially defined all virtue as "the strength and vigor of the soul": *First Discourse* [11] with the Editorial Note *ad loc.*; on *force*, see also A Note on the Translations, p. xlvi above.

[38] **the other virtues, says *Bacon*, deliver us from the dominion of the vices; only fortitude secures us against the dominion of fortune.** In a discussion of competing views of human good, a discussion of which there are numerous echoes throughout this *Discourse*, Bacon comments on the conversation between Socrates and "a Sophist," namely Callicles, "... the sophist saying that Socrates' felicity was the felicity of a block or stone; and Socrates saying that the sophist's felicity was the felicity of one that had the itch, who did nothing but itch and scratch. And both these opinions do not want their supports. For the opinion of Socrates is much upheld by the general consent even of the Epicureans themselves, that virtue beareth a great part in felicity; and if so, certain it is that *virtue has more use in clearing perturbations than in compassing desires.* The sophist's opinion is much favored by the assertion ... that good of advancement is greater than good of simple preservation ...": *Advancement of Learning* II (*The Works*, edited by Spedding, Ellis and Heath, pp. 321f., referring to Plato, *Gorgias*, 492e 5, 494a 8, 494c 4–495a 4). Rousseau had opened this *Discourse* with a quote from Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, a work he clearly had present to mind throughout the writing of the *First Discourse* a year or so earlier. However, the *OC* editor of this *Discourse*, Ch. Guyot, thinks that Rousseau is here referring to Bacon, *Essays* V, and Rousseau's comments about the role of fortune and of adversity in the immediate sequel lend some plausibility to this suggestion. **Regulus's martyrdom in Carthage**: M. Atilius Regulus was taken prisoner by the Carthaginians in 255 BC; in 250 the Carthaginians decided to sue for peace or at the least for an exchange of prisoners, and they sent Regulus along with their ambassadors to Rome in the expectation that he would support a proposal that would release him from captivity; instead, he persuaded the Senate to reject their proposal and, in spite of his family's and friends' entreaties, returned to Carthage where he was put to death in the most cruel manner; **the Younger Cato's feast upon being denied the Consulship in** 51 BC when he

refused to bribe in order to obtain the post (Plutarch, *Life of Cato Utican* XLIX.2–L.1); **Epictetus's equanimity upon being crippled by his master** Once, when his master put his leg to the torture, Epictetus, smiling, said, "You will surely break my leg"; and when his master did so, he calmly went on to say, "Did I not tell you that you would break it?": Origen, *Contra Celsum* VII, 53. **if Socrates had died in his bed, one might now wonder whether he was anything more than a skillful Sophist** cp. *Pol. Ec.* [30], and *Letter to Franquières* [25].

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